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THE BELOVED DISCIPLE.

THE LIFE

OF

THE APOSTLE JOHN.

Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom, one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.—*John* xiii. 23.

WRITTEN FOR THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, AND
REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

Philadelphia :

AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,
NO. 146 CHESTNUT STREET.

ENTERED according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1835,
By PAUL BECK, Jr., Treasurer,
in trust for the American Sunday-school Union, in the Clerk's
Office of the District Court of the Eastern District of Penn-
sylvania.

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Lord Jesus loves all his disciples. When he was upon earth he showed the greatest attachment to those who were his chosen companions ; and one of the last things that is said of him is, that having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end. Yet among them all there was one man who is called *the disciple whom Jesus loved*. It was JOHN. Not the John who was sent before Jesus to proclaim to the Jews that their Messiah had come ; but the apostle who wrote the gospel that is called by his name, and the three letters called the Epistles of John, and the book of Revelation.

We are not told why the Lord particularly

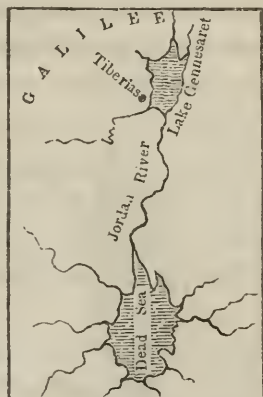
loved John, but it is not difficult to suppose the reason. From many things that are told of him, and from his letters, it is plain that he had a very kind and amiable disposition. His letters are full of benevolence and affection; speaking of little else than the love of Christ, and entreating Christians to love one another.

Just such was the character of the Lord Jesus himself. He was God, and *God is love*. All the disciples, excepting Judas, were good men; but none of them appears to have been so much like Christ, in this respect, as John. It was natural, therefore, that the Lord should feel a particular attachment to him, and that he should become known as the disciple whom he loved. But whatever may have been the reason for giving him this title, the fact that he was so called makes his history the more interesting; and it is the object of this work to relate all that is known about the beloved disciple.

THE LAKE OF GENNESARET.

IN that part of Asia which is known by the name of Palestine, there is a large and beautiful body of water, which is sometimes called the sea of Galilee, because it is in the district of that name ; and sometimes the sea of Tiberias, because the large city of Tiberias was built on its banks. It was also called the lake

of Gennesaret. This lake is about sixteen miles long, and six or seven broad, and the river Jordan passes through the middle of it, from north to south. The water is very pure, and it abounds with excellent fish. There are several towns and villages on



the sides of this lake, and many persons made their living by supplying them with fish. The fishermen used to go out, in their small boats, some distance from the land, and let down their nets into the water, until they caught

enough to take home and sell. Most of the persons who were employed in this business were poor, but many of them very respectable. It is not likely that they made much money by it, and they were probably satisfied if they gained enough to maintain their families from week to week.

At the time of which we are about to write, there was a man among these fishermen by the name of Zebedee. He and his wife Salome lived at the upper end of the lake, in or near the city of Bethsaida. They had two



sons, one of whom was named James, and the other was John. We cannot tell how these sons were brought up. People in the situation of Zebedee and Salome could not have been able to give their chil-

dren much learning. But it does not require persons to be rich to train up their families in a right manner. Parents, however poor they may be, may teach their children *the fear of*

the Lord, which is *the beginning of wisdom*, and is worth more than all human learning. And many of them, too, have time to teach them a great deal of very useful knowledge of other kinds. If Zebedee and Salome were able to read, as most of the Jews were, they could find time in the evening to give lessons to James and John, while they were young. And they might in the same way have taught them to read and understand the Scriptures of the Old Testament; or if they had not the Bible at home, they could teach them to remember what they heard read from it in the synagogue every Sabbath. For at this time the New Testament was not written. And, as printing had not then been invented, only those persons had the Scriptures who could afford to have the Bible copied with a pen.

But we know nothing of the infancy and childhood of Zebedee's two boys. When they were old enough, their father took them with him to fish, and they learned to help him. And if John was as kind and affectionate then, as he was when he became an apostle, it must have given him great pleasure to be able to

assist his parents. Every child who has right feelings will be kind to his father and mother. He will not only honour them, as the fifth commandment requires, but will be glad if he can do any thing to make them comfortable and happy.

John and James grew up to be men ; still they continued to help their father, who was now becoming old. The nets which the fishermen used were made of twine, and were therefore liable to be worn by use, or broken if there should be a great many fish in them. It was part of the business of the fishermen to examine their nets before they went to fish, and see that they were strong, or mend them if they were broken.

One day, as Zebedee and his sons were busily employed at this work, a man was seen walking along the shore. He was about thirty years of age ; but, perhaps, the people who saw him supposed him to be older, for the expression of his countenance was more serious and settled than is common at that age. As he came towards Zebedee's boat, he had to pass one in which there were two fishermen, who were just throwing their nets into the

sea. They were brothers, named Simon Peter and Andrew. The stranger stood on the shore, and called out to them—“*Follow me, I will make you fishers of men.*”

It was the LORD JESUS. He had lately left his home at Nazareth, and come to Capernaum, a city at the northern end of the lake, and not many miles from Bethsaida. It had not been long since he began to preach, and to declare that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. But he was not unknown to all the fishermen. Andrew had



been a disciple of John the Baptist, and John had pointed out to him Jesus as the *Lamb of God*. This took place at Bethabara, in another part of the country. On the same day that this occurred, Andrew brought his brother Simon to see Jesus, and it was then that he gave him the name of Peter. There was an-

other person with Andrew and John the Baptist at that time, and some think it was John, the son of Zebedee ; but this is not known. There can be no doubt that all the fishermen on the lake had heard of Jesus ; some of them, perhaps, had heard him preach in the synagogues. Zebedee and his sons may have been talking about him as they sat mending their nets. They knew that the Messiah had been promised to the Jews. Just at that time, too, the people were expecting him to come ; and though most of them thought that Christ would appear as a great king, yet these humble fishermen may have seen from the doctrines and miracles of Jesus, that he was indeed the Christ, and, like Andrew, already believed on him.

THE MIRACLE AT THE FISHING.

BUT there is another account given, which is so much like that which you have just read, that many suppose it is the history of the same day, except that it tells of it more fully. It is this. The Lord Jesus had been preaching in the different synagogues of Galilee. He entreated the people to repent of their sins, and proved to them out of the Scriptures that he was the Saviour, whom God had so long promised. The people were astonished when they heard these things; but they were still more surprised when they saw him curing sick persons of all kinds of diseases, not by giving them medicine, or attending them as a physician, but simply by telling them to be well, or touching them with his hands.

All the people in Galilee soon heard of these wonderful events. Every body wanted to see Jesus, and to hear him speak. Many would not believe what they heard about his miracles, unless they should see them with their own eyes. Every one who was sick, or had sick children or friends, was anxious

to have them cured. So, wherever Jesus went, the people crowded after him.

One day he was walking by the lake, which has been described. The people came flocking after him in hopes that he would stop and preach to them. Seeing two fishing boats which were not in use, Jesus stepped into one of them. It belonged to Simon Peter. Jesus asked him to push the boat out a short distance from the shore, that he might speak to the people, and be heard by them all. Simon did so ; and the Lord, as he sat in the boat, taught the people collected on the shore.

After he had finished speaking, he told Simon to go out further into the lake, that they might take some fish. Perhaps it was with the kind purpose of giving food to the crowd of persons, who may have come from their homes without bringing any thing to eat. Simon, however, told him, that they had been out all night, and had not taken a single fish ; but as he had told him to do it, he would try again. The net was then let down into the water, and when they began to draw it up again, they found that it was so full of fishes that their net was likely to break. When

Simon saw this, he called to James and John, who were in Zebedee's boat, to come and help him. They immediately came up with their boat; and when they drew up the net, they had fishes enough to fill both the boats so full that they seemed ready to sink.

When Simon saw this, he knew that Jesus was something more than a human being like himself. He knew that he was indeed the Son of God. And as men feel ashamed of their sinfulness when they think that God sees them, and know that they are not worthy to be in his presence, so Simon knelt down before Jesus, and said, "*Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*" James and John were also astonished by this miracle, and, no doubt, felt as Simon did. But they must all have been comforted when the Lord told Simon not to be afraid, and that instead of being a fisherman, he should after that be employed in bringing men to the kingdom of heaven. The words of Jesus were, "*Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.*" That is, it should be his business to go about preaching the gospel, and persuading men to become Christians. Christ afterwards com-

pared the preaching of the gospel to the casting of a net into the sea. For as the fishermen throw their nets in every part of the water where there are fish, and try to take as many as they can, so should the ministers of Christ preach the gospel wherever there are sinners to hear it, and pray and labour that many may be saved.

Not only Simon, but his brother Andrew, and James and John, were told by Christ to follow him. Now, perhaps, the young reader supposes, that they promised they would do so if the Lord would wait a few days ; that Peter must first talk about it to his father Jonas, and John and James to their parents ; and sell their boats and nets, and take a farewell of their friends. Or perhaps they think that they did not like to go until they had first inquired of the Lord where he was about to take them, what they were to do, and how they were to be maintained ?

The Lord is calling upon all sinners to serve and obey him, and these are some of the ways in which thousands are putting him off. The Lord commands them to follow him *now*. But they are not ready to obey ; they do not

like to trust him ; they must think of it a great while first.

No, this is not the way these fishermen acted. They had not seen much of Jesus, and did not know much about his religion ; they had homes, and friends, and occupations. But as soon as they heard the commandment of the Lord, "*follow me*"—*they forsook all, and followed him.*

JOHN AN APOSTLE.

FROM this time John, and the three other fishermen, were with the Lord wherever he went. At different times afterwards he called eight others to follow him; and he called these twelve men *Apostles*. Jesus knew that he had not more than three or four years to remain on the earth, and that he was then to be betrayed and put to death. It was very important that there should be a number of men who should know all that he did, and hear all his instructions, so that after his death they might write a correct account of them, and preach the same truths that he had taught them, all over the world. He knew, too, that though he should be killed and be buried, he should rise from his grave the third day afterwards. It was very necessary to have persons to prove this, or it might be said that he had not become alive after his burial. And this is another thing that the apostles could do better than any other persons, for they were with him constantly for several years, and knew him so well that they could not be mistaken

if they should see him and talk with him after he had risen from the dead.

John, therefore, now became an apostle. The meaning of that title is *messenger*, or a person sent on some particular business. The apostles were to be sent to preach the gospel, and to bear witness of the miracles, and death, and resurrection of Christ. And that they might show they had been sent, and ought to be believed, the Lord Jesus gave them power to heal the sick, and to bring dead persons to life, and to perform the same kind of miracles as he had done himself. As every one ought to know who the apostles were, you have here a list of their names.

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. SIMON PETER, | 7. BARTHOLOMEW, |
| 2. ANDREW, | 8. THOMAS, |
| 3. JAMES, son of Zebedee, | 9. MATTHEW, or LEVI, |
| 4. JAMES, son of Al- | 10. LEBBEUS, THADDEUS, |
| pheus, | or JUDE, |
| 5. JOHN, | 11. SIMON ZELOTES. |
| 6. PHILIP, | 12. JUDAS ISCARIOT. |

The Lord had given to Simon the name of Peter, which means a rock or stone ; and he gave to James and John the name of Boaner-

ges, which means *sons of thunder*. The reason of giving this name is not known; perhaps it was meant to signify that they were to preach the gospel with great power and success. John was of so gentle a disposition that it seems strange he should be called by such a name. But it is not the most noisy and violent persons who do the greatest good, or have the greatest power over men. Mildness and affection will most commonly have the best effect. So the lovely character and persuasive preaching of John, may have had great force in causing men to feel the power of the gospel.

As long as the Lord Jesus lived on the earth his apostles were with him. Until after his death they were commonly called by the name of *disciples*, which means *learners*, a name by which all Christians were afterwards called. Almost always, therefore, when we read of the disciples being with the Lord, we may suppose that John was among them.

He was with the Lord when he spoke that beautiful discourse which is called "*the sermon on the mount*." We may believe that John listened with great attention to all that

he said ; and that when Christ told them how blessed it was to be meek, and humble, and pure in heart, he prayed that he might become so ; and when the Lord said they should not only keep the commandments, but not even have an evil desire in their hearts, that John determined he would watch his heart, and try to keep from every sinful thought, and pray, as the Lord told them to do, "*lead us not into temptation.*"

John also saw the Lord perform miracles wherever he went. It was no matter whether the people were sick of fevers, or palsy, or leprosy ; or whether they were lame, or blind, or dumb, and had been so ever since they were born ; the Lord cured them by a few words or a touch. And even that was not necessary ; for he cured persons whom he did not see at all, when their friends applied to him. And by the same divine power, he brought dead persons to life. Some of these he raised as they were laid out ready for burial ; others as they were carried along to the grave ; and one man came alive from the tomb when Jesus called him, though he had been buried four days.

As John saw such works as these, he could have no doubt that Jesus was the *Messiah*, for no one could have done such things without the power of God. He was indeed convinced of this when he saw that Jesus caused him and the other fishermen to take so many fishes from the lake. But he must have been more and more convinced of the greatness of his Lord, as he saw that nothing was too hard for him to do. No wonder that when he wrote a history of these occurrences, he began by saying "*the Word was God.*" How could *he* doubt it when he saw him do the works of God? And how it must have caused him to love, as well as reverence the Saviour, when he observed that all this power was exercised—not to injure any one, not even to punish those who abused and persecuted him ; but that he went about doing nothing but good, giving health and strength to the sick. feeding the hungry, helping the poor, and bringing back to their friends those whom they wept for as dead !

THE STORM ON GENNESARET.

BUT John saw even more than this. He and the other apostles were one afternoon crossing over the lake in a boat. After they had been sailing some distance, and, perhaps, had got as far as the middle of the lake, where the river Jordan flows through it and makes it rough, a great storm arose. The waves were so high that they broke over the boat, and nearly filled it with water. The disciples became very much alarmed, for they thought the boat would sink, and they should all be drowned.

All this time the Lord Jesus was lying asleep in the back part of the boat. The disciples did not disturb him until they became so alarmed that they knew not what to do. They knew that he could save them from the danger, and so they went and awoke him, saying, that if he did not help them they would certainly perish. When the Lord awoke, and saw the dreadful storm, and the boat filling with water, and the disciples standing around him, he was as composed as if all was

quiet and safe. Before he got up, he reproved the disciples for being so much alarmed, when they ought to have had such faith as would keep them from fearing any danger when their Lord was with them. When he had said this he arose, and looking out upon the storm, said, "*Be still!*" The moment he spoke those words, the wind ceased to blow, the water became quiet, and there was a great calm. Think of that scene! Who but God could have such power over the storm! Even John, and the other disciples, though they had seen him perform so many miracles before, were astonished, and could not help whispering to each other, "*What manner of man is this? for he commands even the winds and water, and they obey him!*" Perhaps some young reader is ready to say—how I wish I had lived in those days! I should have loved to follow Christ, and be with him, and should have been one of his disciples. Do you say so? Well, let me tell you good news. The Lord Jesus is still alive. He still wants to have disciples; and he is willing that you should be one. Yes, more than this—he invites you to be his dis-

ciple. He calls to you as he called to John, "*Follow me.*" He says now, "*Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.*" Will you come now? Are you ready, like John, to forsake all for Christ? "*Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.*"

THE TWO GADARENES.

AFTER the wonderful deliverance which has just been mentioned, the Lord Jesus and his disciples arrived safely on the eastern shore of Gennesaret, and landed in the neighbourhood of the two cities of Gadara and Ger-



gesa. The first persons who met them were two men, who were suffering under that dreadful affliction called the possession of devils. The Lord showed that he had power not

only over common diseases, and over the wind and the seas, but that even evil spirits must obey him. At his command the devils left the two men whom they had so greatly tormented; and who were so violent that every one was afraid to come near them. One of them, in particular, was made so fierce and strong

by the evil spirit, that though his friends had often tried to keep him confined by fastening his feet and hands with chains, yet he would break them off, and escape into the mountains, or go among the tombs, making a dreadful noise, and cutting his body with pieces of stone. But even this man, who was as wild and savage as a beast, became, at the command of Jesus, calm and harmless; his senses were restored, and he did not want to leave Jesus, but begged that he might be permitted to go with him wherever he went. And when the Lord told him he had better go to his home, and let his friends see how he was restored to health and to the use of his reason, he went not only to them, but to all the neighbourhood, telling, with joy and thankfulness, what great things Jesus had done for him.

Soon after this the Lord and his disciples crossed the lake again in the boat, and without any accident arrived at Capernaum.

JAIRUS'S CHILD.

ALTHOUGH John is not particularly named in the accounts that we have of the occurrences last mentioned, yet there is no doubt he was along with the other disciples. They show what sort of life he was now leading, and how Christ was training his disciples to be witnesses for him, by letting them see his mighty works, and teaching them at the same time the great truths of religion by conversing with them, and letting them hear his discourses to the people, wherever he went. What a blessed privilege! What a great advantage, some may say, had John over us! But first remember what privileges you have. Instead of hearing the Lord speak and preach from day to day, and forgetting, as you would do, a great deal of what he said, or making mistakes in trying to remember it, you have his conversations and his sermons printed for you in a book. There they are preserved without mistake; for the Holy Spirit directed those who wrote them down, and kept them from error. If you would like, then, to

know what Christ said, read the gospels. One of them was written by the very John whose life we are considering. Surely we ought to trust the account that is given to us by so holy a man, who was so constantly with Jesus, and saw what he describes. But when we consider also that John wrote by the direction and help of God, we ought to believe every thing that he records, as certainly as if we had been present ourselves.

But having given this specimen of the manner in which the apostles accompanied Christ in his journeys and voyages, we shall hereafter only describe the scenes in which John is particularly mentioned.

There was a man at Capernaum whose name was Jairus. He seems to have been a very respectable person, and was one of those who were intrusted with the care of the synagogue there. Jairus had a daughter, about twelve years old, whom he very much loved. This little girl was taken sick, and became so ill that her father thought she could not recover. She was his only daughter, and was at an age when little girls should be making the hearts of their parents happy, by showing that

they have chosen the paths of religion. Such daughters, whether they are in high or humble stations of life, are blessings to their fathers and mothers, and have the promise of the blessing of God.

If such was the character of Jairus's little girl, it is no wonder her father was greatly distressed when he saw her so dangerously ill. Physicians could do her no good, and he thought his only daughter was soon to be taken from him. But he remembered the kind man who had lately come from Nazareth, who had preached in the synagogue, of which Jairus had charge, and who had healed so many persons of dreadful diseases. Here was his last hope. If he could only get this merciful being to lay his hands on his little daughter, as he had done on other sick persons, he was sure his darling child would be restored to him.

Jesus was that day at the house of the apostle Matthew. He had dined there, and was speaking on religious subjects to the people who were at the table with him, and others who had come into the room to see and hear him. When Jairus heard that he was there,

he ran to Matthew's house, and coming into the room where Jesus was, he knelt down at his feet, and begged him most earnestly to come and cure his child.

Oh! how earnestly he must have looked and spoken! His only child dying—perhaps dead since he had left home, and Jesus the only one who could save her! If parents feel this concern for their children when they are in danger of dying of sickness, how should they pray and beseech the Lord, to deliver them from the danger of eternal death!

Jesus did not disappoint the anxious father, for he saw that he was in earnest and that he had faith. He got up and followed Jairus, who went before to show the way to his house. The disciples also went along with Jesus, and all the people who were in Matthew's house at the time followed them, that they might see what Jesus would do. The people also in the streets joined with them, so that a crowd was soon collected and followed the Lord.

On his way, Jesus cured a poor woman of a disease under which she had suffered for twelve years. And as he was telling her that she

had been healed because she had faith, some persons who had just come from Jairus' house met them. They went up to Jairus and told him that he need not trouble Jesus to go any further with him, for it was too late—his daughter was dead!

Poor Jairus! how sad was the news to him. He was perhaps beginning to think if he had only gone for Jesus sooner, his child would have been saved. But the Lord did not give him time for such distressing thoughts, for as soon as he learned what the message was, he kindly told Jairus not to be afraid, for that if he would only have faith, his child should be even yet restored to him. Every thing now depended on the father's faith.

At length they came to the house. When they reached the door, Jesus would not allow the crowd who had followed him from Matthew's house to come in. They had come out of curiosity, and as they had seen his power in curing the woman as they came along, it was not necessary that they should press into Jairus' house, and into the chamber where his daughter lay dead.

Jesus therefore took only three of his dis-

ciples in with him, along with Jairus and his wife. The three were Peter, John, and his brother James. In the house were a number of persons expressing their grief in the manner which was then common when a person was dead. The women were not only weeping, but wailing or screaming aloud, and making a distressing noise. They had even, according to the customs of the time, employed musicians who made mournful music, and sang melancholy tunes. Alas, how little did this affect the lifeless child in whose honour it was done ! All the noise did not disturb or please her. There she lay, stretched on her bed, pale and motionless, neither hearing, nor seeing, nor knowing what was going on.

Jesus begged the people to stop their weeping, and to cease the singing and music. They thought it as strange that such a thing should be asked, as we should, if a person should come into the house where some one had just died, and tell the family not to show their grief. For if the little girl was dead, they thought the customs of the country on such occasions should be observed. But

Jesus gave them a reason for his request. He told them that the child was not dead—that she was only asleep. This was more likely to stop them than any thing else he could say. But they did not understand what he meant, for they knew that she was dead, according to their meaning of the word. But not knowing what he meant, they answered him with scorn, though they afterwards saw that Jesus had spoken the truth, as well as themselves.

Jesus then went into the chamber where the little girl had died, taking with him none but her father and mother, John, James, and Peter. How anxious must Jairus and his wife have felt now! Jesus went up to the bed where the child was lying, and taking her hand, said to her, MAIDEN, ARISE. As soon as he had said this, the little girl rose up as if she had been awakened from sleep, and was so well and strong that she at once left her bed and was able to walk.

Who can imagine the happiness of Jairus and his wife, when they once more kissed their darling child whom they had expected to follow to the grave! and how thankful

must they have felt to the kind friend, who had brought their daughter back from death, to life and health ! And surely we may hope that the first thing the child herself did, was to inquire who her Saviour was ; and that when she learned he was the Son of God, who had come not only to raise the dead, but to give repentance and remission of sins through faith in him, she became a Christian ; and that when at last she died, it was in the joyful belief, that he who had raised her from death would receive her to himself, so that death would still be no more than going to sleep in this world and awaking in heaven.

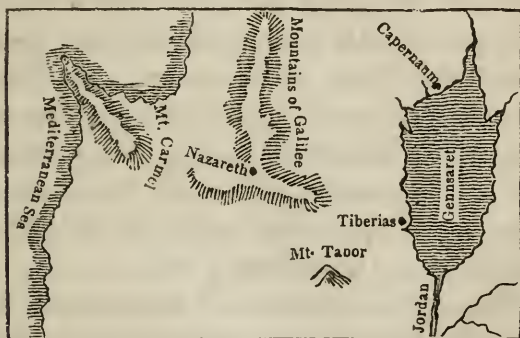
And do any young readers think that this was a greater privilege than they shall ever have ? Would they not like to ask some one who saw all that took place at the house of Jairus, if he thought Christ would be as kind to any daughter that would love him ? If they choose, they shall have this question answered. John himself will tell them, that if they will become true Christians, they shall not only be raised up from their graves to be for ever with the Lord, but that they shall never die,—that is, death will have nothing

fearful in it for them ; and if their bodies die, their souls shall live for ever and ever. Yes, the apostle John tells them this in his gospel, where he has written these words of the Lord Jesus himself :—*I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.*

THE NIGHT IN THE MOUNTAIN.

THE next time that we hear of John, after Jairus's daughter had been brought to life, was at a still more interesting and wonderful scene.

The Lord Jesus took him with his brother James, and Peter, into one of the high mountains of Galilee. Jesus loved to pray; and



he was in the habit of going for this purpose into quiet places, where there was no danger of being interrupted. He seemed to love to retire to the hills and mountains, especially at night, and there speak in prayer with his Father in heaven. What an example is this

to us ! The holy Jesus delighted to spend the whole night in this manner. How ashamed should this make us feel, who have so much greater need of prayer, and yet spend so little time in it, and find so little happiness in the duty.

It was evening when the Lord, with John and the two other disciples, went to the mountain. When they had got some distance up, and perhaps to the very top, the disciples were very tired, and lying down on the ground, fell asleep. But Jesus would rather spend the time in prayer. He knew that he had a great work to do before he left the earth, and as he had become a man for the purpose of performing this work, it was proper for him to look up to his Father to enable him to perform it well.

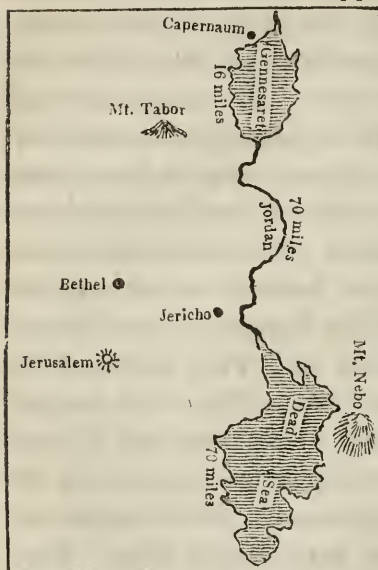
The three disciples had been sleeping for some time, when they were suddenly awakened, probably by a great light all at once shining around them in the darkness of the night. When they opened their eyes they saw the Lord still praying, but every thing about him seemed changed. His face was so bright that it appeared to shine like the

sun. His very clothes, which were made of nothing more than common materials, looked white and dazzling as the snow. He was surrounded with this glory, which was too splendid to be described, and which filled the disciples with wonder. For though they had often seen him do the works of God, they had never before beheld any thing in his appearance that was so different from what had ever been seen on earth. It was indeed, as John said of it when he became an old man, *the glory as of the only begotten of the Father*.*

But this was not all. They observed two men talking with Jesus. They were none of the other disciples ; neither John nor his companions had seen them before, and they too had a glorious appearance, which was not like any thing that is seen among men. They were still more astonished and filled with dread, when they found that one of the men was Moses, and the other Elijah. Moses had been dead nearly fifteen hundred years. He had died on Mount Nebo, opposite the city of Jericho, about sixty miles from the place where they now were. Elijah had not

* John i. 14.

died; but upwards of nine hundred years before this, he had been taken to heaven from the banks of the Jordan opposite to Jericho.



Two more wonderful persons could not have appeared. Moses was the man to whom God gave the laws which had ever since governed the Jewish people. He was sent by God to bring his people from their slavery in

Egypt, and for forty years he led them through the wilderness, though they amounted to several millions.

At the end of that period having conducted them to the east side of Jordan, he died in view of the country, and it is said that "God buried him" in the mountain where he died.

Elijah had been one of the greatest prophets that was ever in the world. The Lord enabled him, as he had Moses, to perform many miracles, and had taken him to himself without dying.

When the disciples found themselves in the presence of two such men, of whom they had so often read in the Scriptures, but whom they never had expected to see till they met them in heaven, it is no wonder they were overcome with surprise and knew not what to do. The sudden appearance of such glory, too, must have dazzled them, and besides all this they heard Moses and Elijah talking to Jesus about his death. This was enough of itself to fill them with anxiety and alarm. They indeed knew not what to say or do. But at last, when they saw that Moses and Elijah were going away, Peter begged that the Lord would permit him and the other disciples to put up three tents or huts, one for the Lord, one for Moses, and one for Elijah, that they might stay in the mountain and be together. But Peter could not have thought of what he was saying; for those who have once quitted the earth and gone to heaven,

need no tents or houses to shelter them, and it was not probable that such a glorious scene would last. But the great lawgiver and the prophet had gone away before Peter had time to do what he proposed.

He had not time, indeed, to think of it any longer himself. For whilst he was speaking, new occurrences took place which engaged the attention of the three disciples. They now observed a bright cloud coming over and surrounding them. Whilst they were looking with awe at this sight, they heard a voice speaking to them out of the cloud, and saying distinctly—THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED ; HEAR YE HIM.

The disciples knew who spoke these words. They must have remembered that when Jehovah led their fathers, many hundred years before, through the wilderness, he caused a cloud to go before them which was dark in the day-time, and bright by night. They must have recollected also, that when God spoke to Moses or to the priests, it was generally from the midst of an appearance like a bright and glorious cloud. Yes, they knew who he was that spoke, for Peter after-

wards in a letter which he wrote, said, “ We were eye-witnesses of his majesty : for he received from GOD THE FATHER honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the holy mount.”*

If John and the two other disciples were astonished and filled with awe when they saw Moses and Elijah, how much more dreadful must they have felt, when they heard the voice of God himself, speaking out of the glorious cloud ! They had been able before to look at what was passing and even to speak to the Lord, but when *this* voice came, they fell on their faces and were afraid to look up. They must have felt as Jacob did at Bethel, after he had seen the Lord in a vision, when awaking he exclaimed, “ Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not. How dreadful is this place ! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven !”†

Oh, how should we feel if we were suddenly to find ourselves in the presence of the holy

* 2 Pet. ii. 16, 17. † Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

God ! We should think that he knew all our sinfulness, and could not venture to look up to him, lest he should destroy us for our wickedness.

But the Lord is as near us as if we heard him speak, and saw some token of his presence. He knows our sins as well as if we had seen him when we committed them. Who then will not be afraid to provoke God ? And who will not rejoice, that though we dare not come alone into his presence, he has sent his Son into the world, that by him we might be able to approach and find mercy.

Yes, Christ is ready to act for humble and penitent sinners, just as he did for the three disciples. For when they were lying on their faces in great fear, he came up to them, and kindly put his hands on them, and told them not to be afraid, but to rise up.

When they heard the well-known voice of their Lord, the disciples ventured to look up, and to rise from the ground. Moses was gone, and Elijah was gone, and the bright cloud was not to be seen, and Jesus appeared as he usually did, without any of the brightness that had shone around him before. They

became composed, when they found themselves once more alone with their beloved Master, and as they came down from the mountain the next morning, they asked him to explain some things that were written in the Old Testament, which he did.

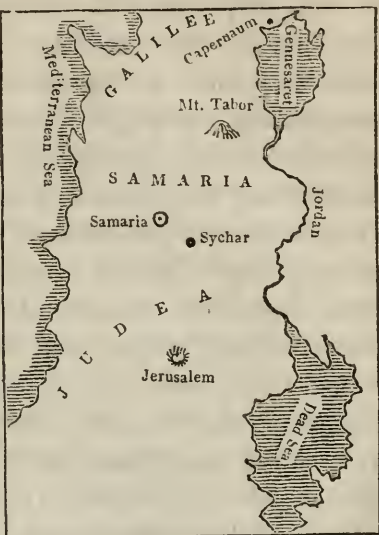
JOHN'S MISTAKES.

JOHN was so constantly with the Lord, and was so much honoured with his friendship, that we should suppose he would have been at all times meek, and merciful, and humble, like his Master. But if the Holy Spirit does not constantly dwell in the heart, the best of men will do wrong. Sometimes it seems as if God did leave good men alone for a little time, that they may find how helpless they are without him. Just as you sometimes see a kind father or mother leave a little child that is not old enough to walk, standing alone a few minutes till it finds that it will fall if its parent does not come to it. Even John stood in need of continual care, to keep him from being angry and proud. Two or three things took place in his life which show this; but there is every reason to believe that they were very different from his usual conduct, and that as he grew older and learned more, he became more and more like his Divine Master.

It was some time after that night which John spent in the mountain, when he saw

Moses and Elijah and heard the voice of God, that the Lord Jesus left Galilee to go to Jerusalem. John and the eleven other disciples were with him.

When they came to the country of Samaria, no one would receive them into their houses, or show them any kindness. The reason of this was that the people of Samaria and the Jews disliked each



other; and they carried this sinful feeling so far, that they would have no dealings of any kind together, if they could help it. The Lord Jesus was too holy and benevolent to hate any one, and he was ready at all times to do good to his enemies. But when the Samaritans found that thirteen Jews wanted

to pass through their village, they remembered how badly they were often treated by people of that nation, and instead of returning good for evil, they would do nothing for them. John and his brother James became angry when they found the people so unkind; and remembering that Elijah in this very country had called for fire from heaven to destroy an hundred and two men, they asked the Lord if they might not punish these Samaritans in the same way. But the Lord had a very different disposition towards his enemies, and instead of being pleased with John and James for what they had said, he reproved them; telling them that they had a very wrong spirit towards the Samaritans, and that he had not come to destroy men, but to save them.

It is probable that this reproof was remembered by John, and that it did him good. This is the way in which all wise persons receive good advice. John soon discovered that, if any one would be holy and righteous, he must love all men. As he afterwards said in a letter himself,—“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he

that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ?”*

At another time Salome, John's mother came with him and his brother James to the Lord, to beg him to give her sons some very great honour in his kingdom. Salome was a pious woman, but even the friends and disciples of Christ did not fully understand the gospel, nor how Jesus was to be their Saviour, until after his death and return to heaven. Not only she, but John and James also, as well as many other good Jews, seemed to think that Christ would be a king at Jerusalem, and that the Jews would become as great and powerful a nation as they were in the times of David and Solomon. As John and James had been among the first disciples that were chosen, and as Christ had taken none but them and Peter with him on some important occasions, Salome and her sons appear to have thought that they might expect some great honour when the kingdom should be established. For not only the mother, but her two sons, asked Jesus that one

* 1 John iv. 20.

of them might be on his right hand, and the other on his left, when, instead of wandering about the land without a home, he should sit on his royal throne in the great city of Jerusalem.

But when they had said this, the Lord told them they knew not what they were asking. He then intimated, that instead of going to Jerusalem to become a splendid king, he was about to pass through great suffering; and that, though they too might have to suffer for his sake, they and all his followers must not expect to be rewarded, until God should give them a place in heaven.

When the other apostles heard what John and James and their mother had done, they were offended with them. But Jesus called them all together, and told them that though in this world kings had great power and authority, and appointed men to high offices, yet it was very different in *his* kingdom. As his desire was to make men better and fit for heaven, it was no matter whether they had power on earth or not; or whether they were rich or poor: but that all true Christians should be humble; and not be seeking

places of distinction. The best way to be accepted of God is to be lowly: knowing that it is God who makes us pious and useful, if we are such, and that therefore we have no reason to be proud. As he had told the disciples before, *whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*. Jesus ended by telling them that he had not come into the world to be waited upon like a prince, but to serve others, and even to give his life a ransom for many.

The Lord had another opportunity of teaching his disciples not to think too highly of themselves. They happened to see some one curing a person of a dreadful disease by a miracle. The man who had performed it was not one of the apostles, but he had done it in the name of the Lord Jesus, and not pretending that it was by his own power. When the apostles saw this, and found that they did not know the man, they forbade him to do such things, supposing that they only had the right to act in the name of the Lord.

John gave an account of this to Jesus. Perhaps it was to know whether they had done right. But Jesus told him that they

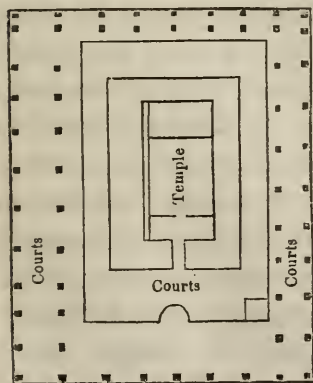
should not have prevented the man from performing miracles in his name, for if God enabled him to do such works, it was a proof that he was a friend of the Lord Jesus.

Thus we see that John was not only distinguished by the confidence and affection of the Saviour, but that he was reproved when he did wrong, and instructed when he acted from ignorance. And so it is still with the people of God. He is their preserver and protector; they are adopted, for Christ's sake, as his children, and like a father he loves and pities them. But, like a good father, he also corrects them when they sin, that they may be put in mind of their duty to him, and become partakers of his holiness. He gives them his word of truth to admonish them of their duty, and to teach them what they ought to believe and do. And he is the happiest and best follower of Christ, who, with the humility of a little child, sits, as it were, at his feet to learn of Him. For this purpose he reads the Bible; believes it because it is the word of God; and obeys it because he loves to do his will.

THE TEMPLE.

AFTER this we hear of no more mistakes of John ; nor do we know that he again gave occasion to his beloved Master to reprove him. He, with Peter and James, were chosen to be with him in some of the most important scenes of the rest of his life.

The Jews were in the habit of frequently going to the Temple in Jerusalem, to see the sacrifices, or pray, and for other religious purposes ; and even to see each other on common business. It was open every day, and there were so many large enclosures, or courts, as they were called, that thousands of people could easily be collected in them



without inconvenience. The Lord Jesus often went into these courts and porches, to converse with the people ; and sometimes large numbers would gather around him to hear

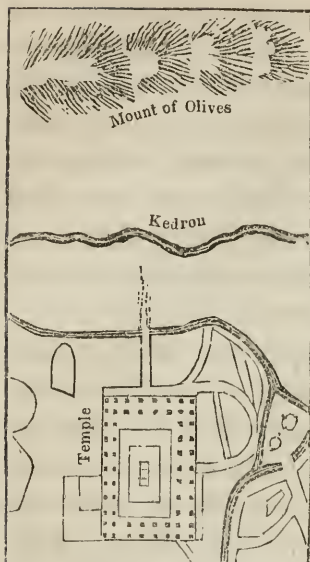
him speak, or to dispute with him. Sometimes he would tell the people a parable, to instruct them in some duty. At others he would openly reprove them for their sins, and teach the necessity of repentance. The people were generally very anxious to hear him; some out of curiosity; some because he told them such beautiful parables; a few because they wished to hear and obey the gospel. Often the worst persons of the crowd who listened to him, and who should have been the most anxious to hear how they might be saved, became angry because Jesus told them the truth.

One day he had been spending some time in the temple in this manner, and as he was coming away, his disciples began to talk about the beauty of the place. They remarked what a splendid building it was, and of what immense size the blocks of marble were of which the walls were made, some of them being seventy feet long. The temple stood on the top of a hill, and to support it there were marble walls on every side covering the hill, one of which was six hundred feet high. Around the temple were

long porticoes supported by double rows, and on one side by three rows, of high pillars. Many parts of it were covered with gold, which shone with great splendour in the sun. As the disciples talked of these strong and magnificent buildings, Jesus told them that the day would come when they should be so entirely destroyed, that there should not be left one stone upon another.

This must have astonished the disciples ; but none of them ventured just then to ask him any further questions about it. But after they left the temple, Jesus went to a beautiful hill that was opposite to it, called the Mount of Olives, or Mount Olivet. John came to the Lord whilst he sat on this mount, and with him came his brother James, Simon Peter, and Andrew, Peter's brother, all of whom Jesus had called at the same time, from their boats on the lake.

From the top of the mount they could see the whole of the temple and its various buildings, and John and his companions begged the Lord to tell them when they should be destroyed. They seemed to think that when



this took place, Christ would begin his new kingdom in some such way as they had before imagined. It was in answer to this question that Jesus made one of the most important and solemn prophecies that are recorded in the Bible. He told those four men exactly what

should happen after his death. He mentioned that impostors should pretend to be the Messiah; that wars and great troubles should prevail; that the apostles themselves should be persecuted, imprisoned, and killed; that Christians should be so much hated, that even fathers would give up their children, and children their parents, to be put to death for believing in Christ. He then described the distress that should come upon Jerusalem; it would be taken by their enemies, and the in-

habitants killed or taken away as slaves. All which things took place forty years afterwards, just as Christ had predicted.

If these disciples were expecting that Christ was going to tell them he would be king at Jerusalem, and that the temple and all its riches would belong to him and his disciples, how astonished must they have been to hear what was really coming to pass ! The glorious temple and the city itself were to be destroyed, and these apostles, instead of becoming great men in the world, were to be hated by all men for the sake of Jesus, and should be beaten and imprisoned, and most of them put to death. But this did not shake their love to Christ, or their confidence in him. They continued with him, though they found every day that their master, instead of being honoured by the people as their desired Messiah, was more and more despised and persecuted. “ *He was in the world,*” said John, “ *and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*”*

* John i. 10, 11.

It was now nearly three years, or, as some think, four or five years, since John had left his fishing boat and his father's house, to become a disciple and follower of Jesus of Nazareth. All this time he had accompanied the Lord wherever he went in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, and the neighbouring regions.



He saw his miracles, and heard the parables, sermons, and discourses which he spoke to the people day after day. Besides this, he and

the other apostles had the advantage of being with him by themselves, and hearing him explain whatever they could not understand, or that Jesus did not see fit to tell to all the people. They were therefore constantly increasing in their knowledge of the religion they were soon to preach. But they did not yet know what was to be the great fact which they were to preach. That their beloved Lord was not only to be put to death on a cross, but that they were to go to all parts of the world to declare this as the only way by which sins could be pardoned, was as yet very far from their thoughts.

But they were soon to be taught this ; for the time had nearly come, to which Christ had been looking forward, when he was to give his life a ransom for many. John was with him constantly, and at this time he seems to have been first called *The Beloved Disciple*, on account of the particular kindness which was shown to him by the Lord in the closing weeks of his life.

THE LAST PASSOVER.

THE Jews, or Israelites, as they were then called, once lived in Egypt. They were treated with so much cruelty that the Lord sent Moses to bring them away, and lead them into the land of Canaan. That was the old name of the country in which all the events took place that we have been describing. The king of Egypt would not allow the Israelites to leave his country, although Moses had proved that God had sent for them, by performing great miracles before him. To punish the king, and to compel him to let the people go, God sent dreadful afflictions upon him and his nation. But yet the king would not permit them to leave Egypt. At last God caused the oldest child in every house of the Egyptians, and the first-born of all their cattle, to die on the same night. But none of the children or cattle of the Israelites died. When this took place, the king consented to let them go, lest God should destroy his whole nation. And thus the Israelites escaped out of the cruel slavery in which they were kept in

Egypt, and set off on their journey to the delightful land of Canaan, which was to be their own.



But God did not wish them to forget that they had once been a poor and oppressed people, and that he had in great mercy delivered them from their bondage. So he commanded them every year, on the same night on which they had left Egypt, to eat a supper

in their houses in such a way as would remind them of what had taken place, and make them thankful to God for his goodness. Whenever this supper was eaten, they were to explain its intention to their children, so that the history should never be forgotten.

This supper was called the *feast of unleavened bread*, because the bread they ate at that time had no leaven or yest in it, to put them in mind that when they left Egypt they came in such haste that they could not wait for their dough to rise. It was also called **THE PASSOVER**; because whilst there was a death in every house of the Egyptians, the houses of the Israelites were *passed over*, or not visited by death.

When the Lord Jesus was upon earth, the Jews had kept the passover, with some exceptions, for nearly fifteen hundred years. As all the ceremonies of the Jews were to be observed until after his death, Jesus probably kept the passover with the apostles as his family, every year after he had called them.

He was now going to be with them at this feast for the last time. He knew that as soon as it was over, he should be put to death,

and as it would be the last occasion in which he could talk with them before he died, he took care that every thing should be prepared for the passover-night.

It was on 'Thursday, the second of April, in the year of our Lord 33, that this last passover took place.* The killing and eating of the paschal lamb was always done on the first night of the passover-week, and the rest of the week was observed by eating no bread that had leaven in it. On the morning of the first day of the passover-week, Jesus sent John and Peter to Jerusalem to get every thing ready that he might eat the supper with his apostles. He himself remained in the Mount of Olives, and perhaps spent the day in prayer. The two disciples did not know where to go to engage a room, and to bespeak the articles necessary for the supper. But Jesus, who knew every thing before it happened, as well as all that did happen, told them that soon after entering the city they should meet a man carrying a pitcher of water; they must follow

* The length of the Lord's ministry, and other dates in this history, cannot be exactly ascertained; but those most commonly fixed on by approved authors are adopted in this volume.

him till they saw him go into a house, and going in after him, were to tell the person who lived there, that Jesus and his twelve disciples were coming that night to eat the passover at his house.

John and Peter did as they were directed, and every thing took place as the Lord had said. They met a man with a pitcher of water, which he had probably just filled at a well in the neighbourhood, and they followed him to the house where he carried it. They delivered the Lord's message to the master of the house. Perhaps he was a Christian, and was delighted with the privilege of having the Lord and his disciples at his house. But this we do not know. However, he showed them a room in the upper story of his house, which was large enough for the thirteen persons who were to come, and which had a table and other furniture necessary for the purpose. All this Jesus had exactly told John and Peter they should find.

Having engaged the room, the two disciples gave directions for every thing that was necessary. A whole lamb must be brought and killed by the priests at the temple : it

had then to be roasted, and a sauce of bitter herbs made to be eaten with it ; unleavened bread and some wine were also to be ready.

John and Peter having attended to all these things, when the evening came, Jesus and the apostles came to the house, and sat down, or rather reclined, as the custom was, at the table. When the passover was first instituted, the people used to eat the supper standing, with their dress tight about them, and staves in their hands, as if just starting on a journey. This was to remind them of the haste with which their fathers had eaten the first pass-over on the night they came out of Egypt. But this practice seems to have got out of use, and the supper was eaten in the usual way in which the people of the east placed themselves at table ; that is, they sat on wide benches or couches, with their feet upon them, and leaning upon one of their arms. John was next to Jesus at the table, and according to this position, his head might be said almost to have lain in the Lord's bosom.

'They then ate the lamb and bread, and drank of the wine, which was handed round in a cup, from which all tasted. In the course

of the evening, Jesus, to show his disciples that they should be humble, and be kind to each other when he was gone from them, went round the benches on which they were reclining, with a basin of water, and washed their feet, and wiped them with a towel. This surprised them, but it no doubt caused them to remember what he taught them about humility, much better than if he had not given them such an example of condescension.

Whilst they were still at the table, Jesus said that one of those very disciples that were then eating with him would give him up to his enemies. Who can imagine how the disciples felt when they heard this? How dreadful to think that any one of the twelve who had been with him so long, and seen his miracles, and known how good, and holy, and kind he was, and who had been always treated as his friends—that any one of these should now be willing to betray him, to sell him to those who were seeking to kill him! Jesus had told them before that he should be betrayed; but he had never said any thing of the person who should do it until now. When they heard it, they were filled with grief, and

Jesus himself was sorrowful as he told them the dreadful truth. The apostles could not think who of them it was that would be so base. They looked at each other in astonishment, and as if trying to see who was the guilty one. They whispered among themselves, one asking another, "Who can it be?" They could not suspect any one in particular, and became so anxious that each began to ask the Lord, "Is it I?" "Lord, Is it I?"

As John was nearest to the Lord, and could speak to him without being heard by the rest, Peter, who was at another part of the table, beckoned to him in such a way as to make him understand that he should ask Jesus who it was. John quietly asked Jesus, and he told him that he should know the man in this way:—It was usual at meals to dip a piece of bread into a dish of sauce, and hand it to the persons at the table. Jesus told John he was going to do this, and the man to whom he would give the sop was the one who would betray him.

Jesus then dipped the bread, or whatever it was he had in his hand, into the thick sauce, made of dates, raisins, and other arti-

cles, which was commonly used at the pass-over supper, and handed it to *Judas Iscariot*. It soon became known to all the apostles that Judas was the betrayer, and Jesus told him openly that he was the man.

The fact was that Judas had already betrayed him. He knew that the Jewish priests and other officers were trying to get an opportunity of seizing Jesus, and having him put to death; and he had gone to them, and asked them, how much they would give him if he would deliver the Lord into their hands. They offered to give him about fifteen dollars, and Judas agreed to the bargain. From that time he was watching to know when Christ would be alone, so that he might tell the priests, and they could take him without its being known by the people, many of whom would have been willing to protect him. When it became known to the disciples at the table that Judas was the traitor, there was no reason why he should stay any longer with them. Jesus, therefore, who knew what Judas had been doing, told him that he had better now go and do at

once what he was about to do. And Judas Iscariot left the room.*

* There is a difference of opinion whether Judas was present at the institution of the Lord's supper. The author in the above account has followed Dr. Doddridge's Harmony, but our readers can compare the narratives of the four evangelists, and judge of its correctness.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE passover supper was now finished, and Jesus, taking some of the bread and afterwards the wine, gave it to the disciples, telling them all to partake. He said that he wished them, and all who loved him, to do the same at proper times, after his death, and that it should be done by his people till the end of the world. There were to be no more passover suppers, because he was to be the sacrifice which was signified by the Lamb; and he wished them to remember him by eating bread and drinking wine in a solemn manner as Christians. He said that as the bread was broken into pieces, so it might remind them, and all other believers, of his body, which was to be wounded and put to death on a cross, for their salvation. And so the wine would put them in mind that his blood had been shed for their sakes.

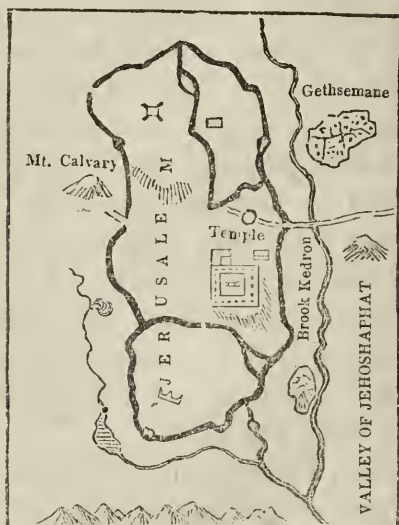
Thus he instituted the Lord's supper; and having sung a hymn, Jesus and his eleven apostles went out of Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives.

We do not know how John acted, or what he said during this solemn scene, but his affectionate heart must have felt very sorrowful, when he heard his beloved Lord say that he was so soon to suffer and to die. But Jesus gave the disciples much consolation. He told them not to be troubled; he was going to heaven to prepare a place for them, and would send the Holy Spirit to comfort and bless them. He begged them to love one another, and he prayed to his Father to keep them united as brethren, and make them holy, so that at last they might be brought to heaven, where they would see their Lord, in a glory brighter than when he was seen with Moses and Elijah in the mount, for it would be the glory which he had with the Father before the world was made.

John heard with attention all that the Lord said, and remembered it; and he has written it down, and it will be preserved till the end of the world.

GETHSEMANE.

BETWEEN Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, there was a shady valley through which the brook Kedron flowed. Beyond



the brook was a garden, where Jesus often went for quiet and retirement. It was known by the name of Gethsemane. It was to this spot that Jesus came with his disciples, after finishing the passover and establishing the Lord's supper. It was then late on the even

ing of Thursday, and Jesus wished to converse a little more with his disciples, and prepare them for what was about to take place. He told them that that very night they would forsake him, but that after his resurrection he would meet them again in Galilee. He then wished to spend some time in prayer. And telling the other disciples to remain where they were, he took John, his brother James, and Peter, to a more retired part of the garden.

John was now well known as *the beloved disciple*; and it had been seen that evening, at the passover, how much attached the Lord was to him. It was very natural that he should be chosen to be with Jesus in a time of sorrow, such as that which was now approaching. Peter and James were also proper persons to be with the Lord at such a season. They, with John, had beheld the Lord's glory when Moses and Elijah spoke with him, and the voice of the Father was heard acknowledging him as his beloved son; and they were the best fitted to behold him now, when he was to be seen as a sufferer. They had then beheld him honoured as *God*;

they were now to see the proof that he was also *man*.

When Jesus had come with the three disciples apart from the rest, they saw that he was in great sorrow. It was a sorrow that seemed to fill his soul, till he could scarcely bear it. It was not because he was afraid to suffer and to die. He had often spoken about it without dread, and had told the disciples that he was going to his Father, and should be eternally glorious and happy. He had power, too, to escape from all his enemies, and ascend to heaven, before they could injure him.

There was no cause of the dreadful sufferings of Jesus in Gethsemane but this:—he came to redeem sinners from the punishment which they deserved. And he consented to become a man, and to bear himself the punishment which the sinners in whose place he suffered would have had to bear, if he had not come to save them. It was this which filled his soul with such sorrow, and we should remember it as we read the account of his sufferings.

Jesus did not conceal his distress from the three disciples. He told them that his very

soul was in such anguish that it almost caused him to die. But he knew, that though he was standing in the place of sinful men, there was one way alone in which help could be found. It was by earnest prayer. He therefore told them to stay near him, and pray for themselves, while he should look to his Father for relief.

Jesus then went a short distance from them, and kneeled on the ground. He prayed that the dreadful sorrow which he felt might be removed. He was so earnest in his prayer that he fell on his face ; and yet he only asked that his prayer might be granted if it were right that it should be ; that is, if it were possible to save sinners without the suffering that was coming upon him. But he begged that his Father would do as He saw was right, and not to relieve him from his sorrow, if it was necessary that he should bear it.

Having prayed in this manner for some time, Jesus came back to John and the other two disciples. They had probably prayed, and as the Lord did not soon return, had fallen asleep. He again advised them to keep awake, and to pray against temptation. For

he knew that soon they were to be put to a great trial of their faith.

This showed that even in his own dreadful distress, he did not forget his beloved disciples. And having thus awakened them, he returned to pray. Again he prayed to his Father, that if it was not right that he should be delivered from his sufferings, that his Father's will, and not his own, should be done. After spending, as is likely, some time in this manner, Jesus again returned to the disciples, but they had again fallen asleep. He probably awakened them, and conversed with them for a while, but soon went again to pray. For it seems as if he felt constant anxiety on their account, as well as for himself.

He still continued to pray on the same subject ; begging that his agony might be relieved if it was possible, and yet desiring that it should not be done if his Father saw that it was necessary to deliver the souls of men from punishment.

Faithful prayer will always be answered. God may not give the very thing that his children ask for, because he may see that it is not best for them to have it ; but he will give them

what is better for them than what they ask. For instance, a person may have a very painful disease, and may pray God to cure it. But God may see that the disease is necessary to keep the person humble, and make him patient and more holy. So he may answer his prayer by giving him grace, or strength to bear the pain, as he did to Paul, when he said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee." And every real child of God will desire to have his prayer answered in the way that God knows to be best.

In this manner were our Lord's prayers answered. His sufferings were not removed, but God sent an angel from heaven to comfort him, and strengthen him to bear them.

Some persons, when they have gained what they prayed for, think there is no need of praying any more. Many children, when they are sick, pray very often to be made well. But when God makes them well they forget him, and do not find it so pleasant to pray to him, as they did when they felt their need of him.

This was not the case with Jesus. When he had been comforted by the angel, he did not

go away from Gethsemane satisfied. No, he prayed more earnestly than before. He felt that it was 'good to pray. And though his agony of soul, on account of the sins of others, continued, yet he knew that God would uphold him.

His sorrows, indeed, increased. It was night, and he was in the cool air, but such was the earnestness of his prayer, and the greatness of his agony, that sweat rolled from him, and even his blood was forced through his skin, and fell in large drops on the ground.

Oh, my young reader ! stop here, and think who it was that suffered this, and what was the cause of it all. Remember, it was the holy JESUS, the Creator of the world, who was in this distress. Remember, that he came from heaven for the very purpose of suffering all this in the place of sinners, so that they might be pardoned, if they would repent of their sins, and trust in him. Can you think that he suffered this for *you*? Can you believe that the Son of God loved *you* so much, that he would come from heaven, and live more than thirty years on this earth, and

then bear this and all that followed, for *your* sake? And if you believe this, are you still sinning against this merciful Saviour? Are you still refusing to become his disciple? Will not all this love and sorrow move you to go to him, and beseech God, for his sake, to pardon your sins, and send his Holy Spirit to change your heart? He now sees you as you read this book, and knows how you feel. He is ready and willing this moment to receive you, if you really desire to be his disciple. Will you not, then, now trust your soul to him, and be his?

THE BETRAYAL.

WHEN Jesus had finished praying, and had come to the disciples, he found that they had for the third time fallen asleep. He aroused them as he had done before, and told them that the hour had come in which he was to be betrayed, and that the traitor was now close by them.

If John, James, and Peter had attended to the advice of the Lord, and spent the time in prayer, they might have been prepared for all that took place, and have kept by their Lord till the last. But now they were terrified, whilst Jesus was ready to meet his enemies without fear, and to give himself up into their hands.

He had scarcely told them that his hour had come, when they heard a mob of people coming into the garden. They saw that they were armed with swords and clubs, and that Judas was leading them on. He had often been in that very garden with Jesus, and knew where to find him. To prevent their taking one of the disciples for Jesus, in the darkness of the garden, Judas had agreed to go up to Jesus and kiss him, which was the manner

in which the Jews saluted each other when they met. The people would know by this that he was Jesus, and were to seize him and take him away.

It seems wonderful that Judas could dare to do this, when he remembered that Jesus had told him, before all the disciples at the pass-over, that he was going to betray him. But his wickedness was now so great that he had no shame, and he went up to Jesus as if he was his friend and disciple, calling him Master, and kissed him.

The meek Saviour was not provoked by this to anger. He had been spending the night in prayer, and his holy soul felt no evil passion. He only asked him for what purpose he had come there, and if he was going to betray him under the pretence of showing his affection in kissing him.

Jesus then went without fear towards the mob, and asked them whom they were looking for. They said they were looking for *Jesus of Nazareth*. Wicked men are often very bold in determining to commit some great crime, but when they come to do it, they feel afraid to go on. This seems to

have been the case with the people who came after Christ. Perhaps they began to tremble with fear, when they found themselves so near the innocent person they had come to injure. There was a great multitude of them, and they had swords and clubs, whilst there were no more than eleven (perhaps only three) men with Jesus, and they could not make much resistance. But yet when Jesus told them plainly, that he was the one they were looking for, the whole multitude began to draw back in terror, and fell on the ground.

This was enough to convince them and the disciples, that Jesus might easily have escaped from them. But he did not wish to avoid his sufferings, and he again asked them whom they had come after. They now took courage and replied again, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus then said that he had already told them that he was the person, and that as he was the only one they were seeking, they should let his disciples go away without injury.

Yes, he was willing to be left alone with this mob of violent men, rather than have one of his disciples suffer any injury by being with him.

The people then came forward and seized Jesus with their hands. The three disciples had been probably in fear all this time, and not knowing what to do. But when their beloved Master was thus taken hold of like a robber, Peter's anger was aroused, and taking hold of a sword, he struck one of the men. Jesus at once told him he had done wrong, and healed the man's wound, assuring Peter that he did not need the defence of men, for if he chose to pray to his Father for help, he would send thousands of angels to deliver him. But he would not have any thing done to prevent what the prophets had foretold in the Scriptures should happen to him.

Among the rest of the crowd was a company of Roman soldiers, with their captain. They now came forward and took charge of Jesus, and to keep him from escaping, tied his hands together.

As all the disciples had gone with Jesus that night to the Mount of Olives, and he had left them to go to Gethsemane with John, James, and Peter, it is likely that by this time, the eleven were either with him, or were somewhere in the garden. They now

saw their Lord taken by the mob, bound, and about to be led away by a guard of soldiers. It was at night. Every thing was terrifying. They knew not what was going to take place. They were astonished and alarmed. Perhaps the three who had been with him the whole time, understood the Lord to mean that they ought to escape, when he told the mob that as they had only come for him, they should let them go away. But whatever may have been the cause, when Jesus was led off by the people, all the disciples left him.

THE HIGH PRIEST'S.

BUT Peter and another disciple soon felt how unkindly they had acted. Although it is not positively certain that this other disciple was John, yet there is every reason to believe that it was he, and we shall so speak of him. They followed the mob till they brought Jesus to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest. The priests and many of the principal Jewish rulers had probably been waiting at his house all the night, to be ready to condemn Jesus as soon as Judas should bring him.

When they came to the house, nobody was allowed to go in but those who were guarding Jesus. There was a woman at the door to keep out the crowd. But as John had some acquaintance with Caiaphas, she permitted him to go in; and when he found that Peter was kept out, John spoke to the woman, and she allowed him also to come inside of the house. Jesus was taken before the priests and officers, and they tried to find persons wicked enough to tell falsehoods about him, so that they might condemn him. While

this was going on, John was probably in the same room with Jesus, listening anxiously to all that was said. But Peter stood in another place, warming himself by the fire, for it was yet night, and the air in Judea at that time is cool. It was then that Peter was taught how unable he was without the help of God to be faithful in times of temptation.

That very evening he had declared boldly to the Lord that though every one else should forsake him, he never would; and that if it should cost him his life, he would not deny him. The Lord had just told him that they all should forsake him that night, and it was contradicting what he said, to speak as Peter did. But the Lord let him see that without his help, he, like all others, would be continually going into sin. Whilst he was in the house that night, he denied three different times that he was a disciple of Christ, or that he even knew him. But when he afterwards saw Jesus, and thought of what he had done, he was deeply distressed, and went out and wept bitterly.

The priests and others had been all this time trying to make an excuse for saying that

Jesus deserved to be put to death. But it was impossible to find any one who would say that he had ever done any thing that was wrong, or deserved the least punishment. His whole life had been spent in doing good and in teaching the truth. But when he acknowledged that he was *the Son of God*, they declared that he had spoken blasphemy, and said that he must be put to death, as the law of Moses required. Not satisfied with this, they allowed the men who were around Jesus to strike him, and to cover his eyes so that he could not see, and even to spit in his face. How must John have felt when he saw his beloved Master standing amongst such men, with his hands tied, and suffering such treatment !

Will you stop here again, my reader, and think why it was that the holy and innocent Jesus bore this, and for whose sake he did it ? You perhaps say how *could* they treat so good a being in this manner ! But how have *you* treated him ? Have you loved, and obeyed, and honoured him as you think these priests ought to have done ? He is the

same Jesus still, and though men no longer have the power to bind and insult and kill him, they may neglect and hate him. Will you be among these ?

THE GOVERNOR'S.

It was now Friday morning. For all that has been related took place on the night after the passover at Jerusalem. They next led Jesus to one of the governors whom the Roman emperor had placed over the Jews. His name was Pontius Pilate. The reason they brought Jesus to him was, that the Jews were not allowed to put any man to death, unless the governor would consent to it. As Pilate was not a Jew, he did not care for the laws of Moses, and therefore would not have allowed them to put a man to death for blasphemy. The Jews knew this, and when Pilate asked what his crime was, instead of telling him what they had condemned him for, they made a new falsehood. They said he had been teaching the people that the Roman emperor had no right to govern them, and that *he* was their king. But they could bring no proof that he had ever said such a thing; and Pilate did not believe it, and told the people that he could find no fault in Jesus.

But this did not satisfy the people. They were determined to have Jesus put to death, and still wanted Pilate to consent to it. Pilate did not wish to condemn an innocent person, and yet did not like to offend the Jews. So when he heard that Jesus lived in Galilee, he thought he would avoid all trouble by sending him to the governor of that district: for Pilate was only governor of Judea. The governor of Galilee, or tetrarch, as he was called, was named Herod Antipas. He was the man who had put John the Baptist in jail, and had him beheaded there. Herod was at this time in Jerusalem; for he was a Jew, and had probably come there to attend the passover.

Pilate therefore sent Jesus to Herod, and the priests and others again accused him. Jesus, seeing that there was no proof brought against him, and knowing that it would be in vain to say any thing to such a man as Herod, made no reply to the accusations. Herod, instead of telling the people that they had proved nothing against Jesus and letting him go, ridiculed and insulted him; and to make mockery of him, put on him a showy dress,

perhaps some old robe which had once been very gay, but which would make the people laugh at Jesus. He sent him back to Pilate with this dress on.

Pilate then told the priests and rulers and the other people, that neither he nor Herod could find any fault in Jesus; but that to please them he would have him beaten with a whip, called *the scourge*, and then let him go. He also proposed, that as it was his custom at every passover to set at liberty some one in prison whom they desired, he would this year dismiss Jesus, who was now a prisoner. But they would not hear to this, and said they would rather he should pardon a man by the name of Barabbas, who was known to be a robber and murderer. Pilate then asked them what he should do with Jesus; for he had not been found guilty of any crime, and yet they kept him bound. The whole mob then cried out that he ought to be crucified,—that is, nailed by the hands and feet to cross pieces of wood, which was the way in which slaves were commonly executed. Pilate again tried to reason with them, but they would not regard what he said, and

only cried out the more, "Crucify him ! crucify him !" He asked them again why he should do this ? What had Jesus done that was wrong ? But they had nothing to answer him, but "*Crucify him ! crucify him !*"

THE CROSS.

AFTER this, Pilate gave up Jesus to the people, rather than displease them. He himself caused him to be beaten with the scourge, a most painful whip of several lashes, with sharp thongs to each. His soldiers then took him, and, to make sport with him, pretended to treat him as a king. They put a purple and scarlet dress on him; and for a crown, they platted together some branches of a thorn-bush, and pressed it on his head. And as kings on great occasions carry sceptres, they mocked Jesus by putting a stick in his hands, which were still tied together. Then they bowed and knelt, laughing at him, and calling him king of the Jews. Some struck him with their hands, and taking the stick which they had made him hold, struck him on the head.

Pilate again tried to persuade the people to be satisfied with what they had done. But they were determined to put Jesus to death, and the unjust and cruel governor consented. The people then, taking off the purple and scarlet clothes which they had put upon him

in mockery, led him away, intending to crucify him. A great crowd followed them, as they took Jesus to a hill a short distance from Jerusalem named Calvary, or, as it was sometimes called, Golgotha; which was the place where they commonly put persons to death.

Weak and exhausted as Jesus must have been, after the sleepless and anxious night he had passed, and the sufferings of the morning, they made him carry part of his own cross up the hill. And to make it appear still more as if Jesus was a common criminal going to be punished, two men were taken to Calvary who were to be crucified for robbery.

Although so many things had taken place since the passover on Thursday evening, yet it was now only nine o'clock on Friday morning when they brought Jesus to the place of death. As soon as they reached the place the soldiers laid a cross on the ground, and taking Jesus, they placed him on his back upon it. They then stretched out his arms on the cross piece of wood, and while one man held his arm, another drove a large iron spike through the middle of his hand into the wood. Then they drove spikes through his feet,



fastening them to the lower part of the cross. A hole was dug in the ground, and several men lifting up the cross, with Jesus nailed on it, put the end of it in the hole, and, making it fast, left it standing. The two robbers were crucified at the same time, and one of them was placed

on each side of the Lord Jesus. When the soldiers had done this, they sat down on the ground to wait until the crucified persons should be dead: for men often passed several hours in great agony on the cross before they died.

The enemies of Jesus were not even satisfied now, when he was suffering the most dreadful and disgraceful punishment they could inflict. They insulted him even on the cross; asking him why he did not come down, and ridiculing what he had said. The soldiers also took his clothes, and divided them among themselves.

But there were other persons at Calvary that morning than the enemies of Jesus. There were some to weep at his sufferings, and who would not leave him to die alone. There stood his mother, who was now probably more than fifty years of age. What a dreadful sight, to behold her son in such tortures, without being able to do any thing for him ! Her sister was with her ; and also a woman whom Jesus had cured of a distressing disease, whose name was Mary, of the town of Magdala, and therefore called *Magdalene*. The beloved disciple was also there. It is not likely that John had left the Lord a moment since he was taken to the house of Caiaphas. He knew he could not help him, and that Jesus did not wish him to try. But he loved his Lord too well to leave him. He, therefore, followed him to Calvary, and, perhaps, sometimes spoke affectionately to him on the way. But, distressed as John must have been, he no doubt tried to comfort the mother of the dying Jesus. He could tell her of many things he had said about his coming again, and could repeat some of the delightful promises and consolations which he had given to his

disciples when he had told them not to let their hearts be troubled. None of the disciples, indeed, understood exactly what Christ meant when he told them he would rise again the third day, but yet they must have had a hope that he would in some way triumph over his enemies. John, and the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene, stood near the cross. There were others of his friends who stood further off: among these was Salome, John's mother.

Notwithstanding his dreadful agony, Jesus did not forget his mother, or his beloved disciple. Joseph, her husband, seems to have died before this; and there would be now no one to take care of her in her old age. As Jesus hung on the cross, and saw her and John looking anxiously up to him, he remembered this. He knew how much John loved him, and that he would do any thing he asked of him. Jesus, therefore, speaking to his mother, and alluding to John, said, "*Behold thy son.*" Mary knew at once that he meant that, as he was now about to leave the world, she should regard John with as much affection as if he were her own son. He then said to John—

“ *Behold thy mother ;*” and these few words were enough to make John understand that he wished him to regard and take care of Mary, as if she were his own mother.

Nothing can be more tender or affectionate than this scene. It showed not only how much the Lord loved his mother, but also what confidence he had in his disciple. Most persons when in great pain can think of none but themselves. But it seems as if Jesus was always thinking of others and trying to do them good. He comforted the women who lamented for him as he went from Jerusalem to Calvary ; and even on the cross not only provided for his mother, and showed his regard for his beloved disciple, but gave a promise of mercy to one of the robbers, when he found he was penitent, and at last prayed for those who were putting him to death.

Jesus was about six hours on the cross before he died. At twelve o’clock it began to be very dark, and continued so until three in the afternoon. What dreadful sorrows he passed through in that time cannot be told. He was suffering great pains from his crucifixion, but he had more awful distress to bear.

He was the sacrifice for sinners ; he had consented to take their punishment upon himself, so that those who repented and believed in him might be pardoned. It seems as if his Father had now left him ; for he cried out aloud, “ *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me !*” Soon after this his lips were wet with vinegar, which one of the soldiers put to his mouth by fastening a sponge to the end of a long reed ; and this was the only thing that he took to refresh himself during the whole day. The time of his departure was now near, and the great work for which he had come down from heaven and endured all this agony, was nearly done. He knew this, and said aloud, “ *It is finished.*” He then said, “ *Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.*”

Every one was looking up to the holy sufferer. His mother and his beloved disciple must have watched every motion and listened to every sound. They looked anxiously at his face, and as they looked, his head was suddenly bowed—Jesus was dead !

The darkness still continued ; the great curtain in the temple fell apart as if it had

been suddenly torn : there was an earthquake : rocks were violently split : graves were opened, and many holy men arose. Such things would not have happened at the death of a mere man ; and even the soldiers were in fear, and one of them cried out, “ *Truly, this was the Son of God.*” And the people that had followed Jesus that morning to Calvary, and had cried out for his death, were now filled with terror, and striking their breasts as a sign of their distress, went back to the city.

But John did not even now leave the Lord ; and while he stood near the cross, he saw one of the soldiers with his long spear pierce the dead body of Jesus to the very heart. Soon after this the body was taken down from the cross, as the Jews did not wish it to remain on the Sabbath, which commenced on Friday evening. Several of the friends of Jesus took charge of it, particularly a rich man named Joseph, who obtained permission of Pilate to bury it himself. Joseph, Nicodemus, and others, wrapped the body in fine linen, with a great quantity of spice to preserve it from decay, and laid it in a new tomb which belonged to Joseph, and was situated in

a garden near Golgotha. There they thought they would let it remain until the Sabbath was over, and then they would have it anointed and embalmed, according to the Jewish custom, and leave it in the tomb. So little did they know what was about to take place !

When John was going home from Calvary that evening, he did not forget what his Lord had said to him from the cross. He took with him the sorrowing mother of the crucified Jesus, and from that time took care of her as if she was his own mother. His affectionate disposition, and his love to the Lord, and to her for his sake, must have made her home as happy as any place could be, to one who had parted with such a son.

THE RISING.

WHEN Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, was over, some pious women went to the tomb of Jesus before sunrise the next morning, to finish the embalming of the body, which they had not had time to do on Friday afternoon. As a large stone had been rolled to the place of entrance into the tomb, (the tomb or grave itself being cut out of a solid rock,) the women were wondering, as they went along, how they should get it moved away. But when they came to the place, they saw that the stone was already taken from the door of the sepulchre, and that the body of the Lord was gone. One of them at once ran back to Jerusalem, and told John and Peter. The two disciples ran in great haste to the place, and there found that it was indeed so. They went into the tomb, and saw the linen in which the body had been wrapped, but Jesus was not there. They soon returned to Jerusalem, wondering at what had occurred, and perhaps intending to call the apostles together to decide upon what should be done.

The truth was, that very early on Sunday

morning, before the women had gone to the grave, an angel descended from heaven, removed the stone from the entrance, and Jesus arose alive and left the burying-place. There was in the garden at the time a company of Roman soldiers, which Pilate had sent to guard the sepulchre and prevent the disciples from taking the body away. For several persons had heard Jesus say, he would rise the third day after his death, and the people thought that the disciples might come and take away his body, and then pretend that it had gone to heaven. To prevent this, these soldiers were placed to guard the tomb; and to be sure that no person could move the stone without its being known, it was sealed with wax, which of course would be broken if the stone was moved. The appearance of the angel was so splendid and terrible, that when the soldiers saw him move the stone and sit upon it, they trembled with alarm, and could say or do nothing; and probably as soon as the angel disappeared, and they found that Jesus had gone, they went to the temple to tell what had taken place.

Mary Magdalene was the person who

brought the news to John and Peter that the sepulchre was empty. After they had seen the place, and returned to Jerusalem, she came back to the garden. She was standing by the tomb weeping in great distress, when happening to look in, she saw two angels sitting in the sepulchre. When they observed her, they asked what was the matter with her. She told them she was weeping because some one had taken away the body of the Lord, and she could not find what they had done with it. As she said this she observed another person standing near her, who also asked her why she was there weeping, and whom she was looking for. In her distress she did not take particular notice of the person who spoke, and perhaps at that early hour of the morning, and in a dark part of the garden, she could not easily have known any one. But thinking that it was probably the gardener of the place, she begged him to tell her if he had removed the body of Jesus from the grave; and if he had, and would tell her where it was, she would take it away, and have it buried in some other spot.

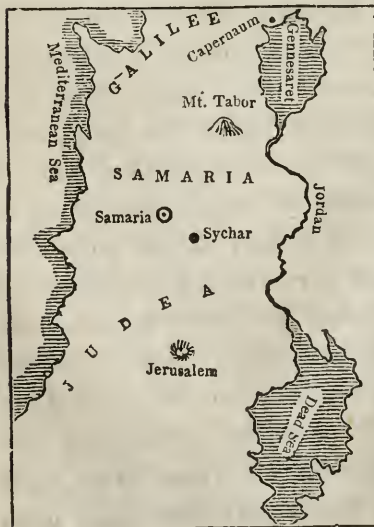
When the person only answered her by

calling her name, *Mary!* she knew at once it was Jesus himself who had been speaking to her. It seems as if she must have been overcome with joy and astonishment, and perhaps was falling on her knees before her Lord; for he at once told her not to show any such marks of reverence and love at that time, but to go and tell his disciples that he was soon to leave the earth and ascend to his Father.

These were some of the wonderful events which took place on the Sunday morning after the crucifixion and burial of the Lord. It soon became known to all the apostles that Jesus had risen. Some would not believe it; all were astonished. For though Jesus had so plainly declared he would rise again, none of them seem to have understood him to mean that he would so soon appear again in his own body. But their doubts were soon removed, for that very evening he met ten of the apostles together in a room in Jerusalem where they had assembled. John says the disciples were rejoiced to see their Lord again. He must have been particularly glad himself to see the Master whom he so much loved, and who had shown him such great

affection as to make him known among all the others as the Beloved Disciple. He and the other apostles now understood what their Lord had meant, when he told them he would rise the third day. They began to see that there was something more important in his death than they had yet clearly known, and the glorious and wonderful truth began to be perceived, that he had died as *the Lamb of God*.

On the morning of his resurrection the Lord sent word to his apostles to go to Galilee, and promised to meet them there. John



therefore went back to his old home on the Lake of Gennesaret.

How much he had seen and learned since he had left his boat and net there to follow Jesus! What wonderful scenes had

he passed through ! He was then a humble fisherman, expecting perhaps to spend his whole life in the same business that his father Zebedee had followed before him. But he had been called away from his occupation and his home to follow him who was then known only as a man of Nazareth. He had been with him several years. He had seen him perform the works of God ; he had seen him surrounded by divine glory, and heard him called the Son of God by the voice of the Father from heaven. Again, he had seen him pleading with the Father in agony which forced the blood through his skin. He had seen him betrayed, persecuted, abused, seized by a mob, bound, and insulted ; and at length put to death in the most public and disgraceful manner. Then he had seen the darkness, and the earthquake, and the rising of the saints, which took place as he hung on the cross. And now he had beheld him again alive, and had talked with him, though he had seen him pierced to the heart, and though he had lain in the grave.

THE FORTY DAYS.

JOHN and his brother James, with Peter, and four other disciples, were one day walking together along the lake, waiting for the time when they were to meet the Lord. They had been told that Jesus was going to ascend to heaven, and perhaps they were wondering what they should then do, and whether they should come back to their nets on the lake. They all agreed to take a boat and go out to fish. They prepared nets and went out, but after trying for the whole night they took none. On the next morning some one called to them from the shore, and told them if they would throw their nets on the other side of the boat, they would be sure to find some. They did so, and when they began to draw their net up again, it was so full that they could not get it out of the water.

John at once said it must be Jesus who had told them where to throw the net. He remembered that the Lord had performed a similar miracle when he had first called them on the lake, several years before. John told

Peter it was certainly the Lord. Peter would not wait till the boat could be brought to shore, but jumped into the lake, and swam to the place where Jesus stood. John and the others soon brought the boat to the same spot, dragging the net full of fishes through the water. The seven disciples now met their Lord with joy. They saw by this act that he had the same divine power as he had before his death, and when he first called them to follow him.

They dragged the fishes on the land, and broiling some, ate of them. When they had finished, Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved him. This may have been intended to remind Peter that he had three times denied him, and that he ought to be now very careful in what he said, for the time was coming in which he would have greater trials and temptations than he had in the hall of Caiaphas. But Peter answered him each time, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee," and each time he was told to feed the sheep or lambs of Christ, meaning that he was to show his love by acting to his people like a kind and careful shepherd. Jesus then signified

to him that the time would come when he should be bound and put to death for his sake. But Peter was now strengthened by faith in his Lord, and was not alarmed by what he foretold; so that when Jesus told him to follow him, immediately he arose and went after him. When Peter rose up to follow Jesus, John also walked after them. Peter, observing him, asked the Lord what he should do? for he was anxious to know what would happen to a disciple so much favoured as the beloved apostle. Jesus re-proved his curiosity, by asking if he should choose John to remain until he should come, what difference did it make to Peter? The apostles misunderstood this, and thought that Jesus meant that John should never die; but John himself did not imagine this.

At various times and in different places, for the space of forty days, the apostles saw the Lord, and he gave them directions how they were to act, and spoke to them on many subjects which they had not clearly understood before. By his divine power he enabled them to understand the Scriptures better than they had ever done. He showed them how the pro-

phesies had been fulfilled in his death and resurrection. He now proved to them that it was necessary that he should have died to make atonement for sin, so that pardon might be obtained by all who should repent and trust their souls to him in real faith ; and that this salvation was not procured for the Jews only, but for sinners of all nations. He told them that they must now go and spend their lives in preaching this truth everywhere, and in giving their witness to his death and resurrection. They were to wait at Jerusalem until Jesus should leave the earth, and send from heaven the Holy Spirit to prepare them still better for their work. But as soon as this took place, they were to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature ; the Lord declaring that those who believed the gospel and obeyed, it should be forgiven and saved for ever, and that those who would reject it should be condemned to everlasting punishment.

There were many important truths and directions which Christians ought to know, that the Lord did not speak to his disciples during his life on the earth. But all

these were revealed to the apostles by the Holy Spirit, and they were preached by them, and written in their epistles. We should remember, in reading the New Testament, that whatever is there written by Divine direction is just as true and important as if the Lord Jesus had spoken it; for it was revealed by his Spirit; and if we wish to know all the doctrines of the Christian religion, we must read the Epistles and Acts of the Apostles, as well as the four Gospels.

The Lord spent nearly six weeks on earth after he had risen from the sepulchre. That was long enough time for the apostles and other disciples to be convinced that it was their crucified Lord who had been restored to life, and to teach the eleven what they were to do after he should finally leave them.

THE ASCENSION.

AT the end of the forty days the Lord took the apostles again to the Mount of Olives. Jesus and his apostles were now to separate, never again to meet in this life. He was going to his throne in heaven, and to the glory which he had with the Father before the worlds were made ; they to tell the Jews that their Messiah had appeared, and all the world that a Saviour had died, and had gone to heaven to make intercession for those who should repent and believe. It must have been a solemn and interesting time. Jesus loved them to the last, and as his parting act of love he lifted up his hands to heaven and blessed them. Whilst he was blessing them, he was separated from them, and he arose from the mount in a cloud which soon hid him from their sight. While they were looking upward earnestly after him, two beings, who were no doubt angels, appeared to them, as if sent by the Lord to comfort them. They declared to the apostles that the same Lord, who had now ascended from the earth in a cloud, would in the end of the world return

in the same manner, to judge men according to the gospel which they were now to preach.

Their Lord was no longer their earthly companion, as he had been for not less than three years. He was now exalted to the right hand of God, and the apostles worshipped the ascended Saviour. Having done this they went back to Jerusalem.

PENTECOST.

AFTER returning to the city, John and the ten other apostles met together for the purpose of prayer. There were a few others of the dearest friends of Christ with them, and among them his mother. They did not meet merely to talk about the wonderful things that had occurred, and to ask what should next take place. They felt more than ever the want of grace to teach and guide them, now that their Lord had left them. But they knew he was only taken out of their sight. Like all pious people, they wished to speak to their Saviour in the only way that was left to them. That was by prayer. None but Christians know how comforting it is in time of sorrow or trial, to pray. It is going to their best friend, and telling him their distress, and they know that he is able to help them. And for the same reason, they love to go to him that they may become more like him in holiness, and in every thing that is excellent and pure. For the more we are with a person we love, the more we get to resemble

them. And the more Christians think of Christ, and follow his example, and look to him for direction and help, the more will they become like their blessed Lord, and be prepared to meet him in heaven. It is no wonder then that the apostles and the other friends of Jesus met to pray as soon as he had left them, and that they found it so happy an employment as to continue in it for some time.

As the Lord wished to have twelve apostles, and as the wretched Judas had hung himself soon after he had betrayed his Master, Matthias was now chosen in his place. A few days after this, the Jewish feast called Pentecost took place, which was fifty days after the Passover. It was then that the promise of the Lord was fulfilled, that the Holy Spirit should be sent down on the apostles. They were enabled suddenly to speak in different languages, though they had never learned them. Besides this, they were so guided by the Holy Spirit that all their preaching and teaching should be just as the Lord would have it done, and without any mistake or ignorance. This is called *inspiration*. And

it is because the apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit, that all they wrote, as well as what they spoke, is known to be from God. And on this account we should receive their letters, or epistles as they are called, and their sermons and remarks as they are recorded in the book of the Acts, as the word of God.

As soon as the people heard that the apostles could speak in so many different languages, a great multitude of people came to see them. But the apostles did not wish to make a show of it, as if they were proud of what God had enabled them to do. They made use of this power to preach the gospel at once to all the people, from different parts of the world, who came out of curiosity to hear them. And during that very day about three thousand persons were converted, and believed in Jesus. God continued to bless the preaching of the apostles in Jerusalem, so that every day some souls were added to the church there, which, before Pentecost, had only one hundred and twenty members.

We do not know how John was particularly employed at this time. Peter was the

principal preacher, but there can be no doubt that the other apostles were very active in teaching the people and conversing with them, and explaining what they wanted to understand.

THE LAME BEGGAR.

ABOUT this time, however, John and Peter performed a miracle which caused great astonishment among the people. They were going one afternoon about three o'clock to the temple. That was the time in which the evening sacrifice was offered, and many persons went to see it, and to offer their prayers. As John and Peter were going into one of the gates, a lame beggar, who was sitting there, asked them to give him something; for he was poor, and could not walk. The apostles stopped, and Peter spoke to the man, who looked at them very attentively, supposing they were about to give him some money. But Peter told him that he had neither gold nor silver to give him, though he would give him what he could.

How surprised he must have been to hear Peter then tell him in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth to get up and walk! The beggar probably remembered that a person of that name had been crucified six or eight weeks before, but could hardly imagine how he could be cured through him of a lameness, that he

had had ever since he was born. Or the beggar may have heard Jesus preach in the temple, and have already believed in him, and did not doubt that his apostles, in his name, could restore him. However this may have been, Peter took him by the hand and helped him to get up. The poor man now found that he could stand, then he walked, and at last so joyful and thankful was he for this mercy, that he leaped about, and praised God for his goodness. He was very thankful to Peter and John for their kindness, and held them as if he did not want them to go away. But he knew that it was the Lord who had given them power to heal him, and that it was not in their own name, but in the name of Jesus, that they had done it; therefore, he praised God, and went with the two apostles into the temple, to offer up his thanksgiving at the time of evening prayer.

If this beggar was so thankful for being enabled to walk when he had been more than forty years without being able to do it before, how should those feel who have never known what it is to be lame? This poor man had to be carried every day to the gate of the tem-

ple, that he might get enough from the people who would pity him, to buy himself food and clothes. But how many of the readers of this history have always had the use of their limbs, and have no need of begging to supply their wants ! They have greater reason to be thankful than this poor lame beggar, and yet it is likely they have never thought of thanking God that they have strength to walk, and that they have parents and friends to take care of them, or that they are able to take care of themselves.

JOHN AND PETER IMPRISONED AND BEATEN.

BUT this act of charity brought Peter and John into some trouble. When the people saw the beggar, that had been so long sitting from morning to night without being able to move, all at once walking and leaping as well as any one, they began to crowd around the apostles, and to look at them with the greatest curiosity and astonishment. The apostles thought it was a good opportunity for speaking to the people about Christ, and to preach the gospel to them. So Peter began by saying that they should not think that he and John had performed this miracle by their own power, or because they were very holy. It was in the name of Jesus, he said, that they had done it, and it was through faith in him that the beggar had been cured. This Jesus they had crucified; but he begged them to repent of their sins, and be converted, that they might be pardoned and saved, when he should come again, to judge the world.

While Peter and John were preaching in

this way, a number of priests and other persons came to the place. They were very angry, because the apostles were teaching the people such things, and seized them, and had them put into a prison, or some such place of safety, intending to have them tried and punished the next day ; for it was now evening. But no man can prevent the truth of God from doing the good which he intends. A great number of people who heard Peter and John preach that afternoon, were convinced of the truth of what they said, and became Christians.

The next day there was a great meeting of the priests and rulers and other officers of the Jews. John and Peter were brought before them, and as they had done nothing that was wrong, the officers began to ask them by what power, or in whose name they had cured the lame man. They wished to find some excuse for stopping these two men from saying any thing more about Jesus, whom they had crucified.

But the apostles were not afraid of all the great men before whom they were standing. Peter boldly told them, as he had told the people the evening before, that it was through

the help of Christ they had performed the miracle ; and declared, that though the Lord had been despised and put to death, there was no way of being saved except through him.

When the priests and rulers heard Peter and John speak so boldly about the Lord, they were astonished, particularly as they knew they were plain men, and not like the learned and great persons who were commonly the only ones that could speak so well. Besides this, the very man they had cured was now standing near them, and all the people knew that he had never been able to walk till the apostles had told him to arise. They did not know, therefore, what to do with John and Peter, or what to charge them with. But at last they concluded to forbid them saying any thing more about Jesus, threatening to punish them severely if they should be found doing it again. But Peter and John told them plainly that they could not disobey God. He had sent them to preach salvation through his Son Jesus Christ, and they must do this, whatever trouble it might bring upon them.

When this was over, John and Peter went to a meeting of Christians, and after telling

what had taken place, they prayed together that the Lord would enable his apostles to preach his gospel, without the fear of any evil that their enemies should threaten, and that they might still perform miracles in his name, to prove that they were sent by Him. Their prayer was answered at once; the Holy Spirit was granted to them, and they preached without fear, and enjoyed that delightful peace and happiness in their minds, which Jesus had promised the Comforter would give them. The priests again seized them, and put them into the common jail; but the Lord sent an angel, who brought them out the same night, and commanded them to continue preaching to the people. They did so; and when they were brought before the priests and rulers the second time, they again said that they must obey God rather than men, and declared that the same Jesus whom they had so cruelly put to death, had risen from the grave, and was now in heaven to give repentance and pardon to sinners. This enraged the priests still more, and they would have killed the apostles, if one of their learned teachers of the law had not advised them to

wait, and see if God would show whether he approved of these men or not. The apostles were therefore again dismissed, after they had been shamefully beaten. But they went on to preach every day, not only in the temple, but going to the people in their houses, and teaching them about Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation through him.

Not long after this, one of the disciples was murdered in Jerusalem on account of his faithful preaching. His name was Stephen. False charges were brought against him, as had been done against the Lord, and when he was warning the Jewish council that in rejecting Jesus as the Saviour they were resisting the Holy Ghost, they drove him out of the city, and stoned him to death. Stephen was the first person who lost his life in consequence of his professing the religion of Jesus. He was the first *martyr*. Since his death thousands have been persecuted and killed, because they loved Christ and his gospel more than their own lives. Every one should be willing to lose his property and his life, and every thing else, rather than deny the Lord. He has promised to be with those

who put their trust in him, even in time of death, and to receive them into heaven. And every true believer has such confidence in his promises and his love, that he will not fear to die.

SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY.

JOHN and Peter continued to be active in the service of the Lord. They were appointed by the other apostles to preach in Samaria, and they went through many of their villages proclaiming the gospel. The feelings of John were very different now than when he was there with Jesus, when he and his brother wished to call for fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritans, because they would not receive them into one of their cities. They often went together to different places, and though Peter was generally the one who spoke, yet the lovely and gentle disposition of John must have had great influence in doing good, and in recommending the religion they taught. Peter was a man of very warm feelings. He acted and spoke with great quickness, and sometimes with too much haste. John seems to have been more mild and prudent. It was therefore wise that two such men should go together, that they might advise and assist each other according to the circumstances in which they

should be placed. It seems likely that Peter was best as a preacher and speaker; that in cases of difficulty he was more bold and ardent than John; and that his talents were very valuable in proclaiming and defending the truth, in the midst of its enemies and opposers. John, we should suppose, was the most useful in private; he, probably, was most successful by his conversation. No person, of any right feelings, could know such a man as John, without loving and respecting him. This is an important means of gaining and exerting influence over others. John may have done as much in this way, as Peter did by his more public efforts. At all events, the Lord knew their different dispositions and talents, and sent them out together on the most important duties.

The Christian religion continued to spread throughout the Jewish country. One of the most bitter enemies of Christ and his gospel was converted, and became one of the most active preachers that ever lived. This man had stood by and seen Stephen stoned to death, and was so anxious to have him killed, that when the men who stoned him put off

their coats for the purpose, he took care of them till it was all over. And at the very time he was converted, he was going to Damascus at the head of a company of men, to seize all who believed in Christ, that he might bring them to Jerusalem and have them punished. This man was Saul or *Paul*, and he became so true a Christian, and so active in the service of Christ, that though he was not one of the twelve who had been with the Lord, he also was called an apostle.

The gospel was now beginning to be preached to other nations than the Jews; though the apostles at first thought that Jesus only came to be the Saviour of that nation. The Jews called all other nations Gentiles or Heathen, and believed that they had nothing to do with the true religion. But now the Lord taught them, that when he had commanded them to preach the gospel to every creature, he meant all persons in the world, whether Jews or Gentiles. And the apostles rejoiced in the delightful fact that they might proclaim the blessings of the gospel to all nations on the whole earth.

DEATH OF JOHN'S BROTHER.

BUT whilst they were enjoying the happiness of seeing the religion of which they were once almost the only believers, now extending so rapidly, they had persecutions and afflictions to suffer. Herod Agrippa, the king of Judea, was opposed to the gospel and wished to please the Jews by afflicting the church of Christ. He caused James, the brother of John, to be seized and beheaded. There is no account of his being charged with any other offence than his being a disciple of the Lord Jesus, and for this the king had him put to death, as his uncle Herod Antipas had caused John the Baptist to be destroyed, and in the same manner.

It is said that such was the composure and peace which James showed when he was condemned to death, that the man who gave witness against him to Herod became convinced that the Christian religion was true, and declared himself to be a disciple of Jesus. This account says that he was condemned to die at the same time with James, and that on their way to the place of execution he begged

the apostle to forgive him; and James, turning to him, said, "Peace be to thee," and kissed him. They were beheaded together.

The death of James must have been a great affliction to John. James was not only his brother, but he was a Christian; and no brothers are so much attached to each other as those who are truly pious. They had been brought up together as children, and as men they followed the same business, in the same boat. They had been called at the same time to be apostles; and had together left all to follow Jesus. Ever since that time they had been with each other, and the Lord had taken them both with him in the most important and solemn scenes of his life. To lose such a brother, and in such a way, was painful indeed. But John had consolations that none but Christians can have. He knew that though his brother had been inhumanly murdered, he had the promise of Christ that he had prepared a dwelling-place for him in heaven. There he expected to meet him in a short time, and there they would both join their beloved Saviour and never more be separated. Oh, how unhappily must those bro-

thers and sisters feel, who have no reason to think they will thus meet together, and be for ever with the Lord ! Must they separate for ever ? Or must they all be unhappy for ever ? This is enough to make every one anxious not only for himself, but for all whom he loves, that when one is taken away by death, the rest may not sorrow as those that have no hope.

James was the first of the apostles who died, and it is supposed that they all, like him, died as martyrs, for the sake of Christ, excepting John. When James was killed, Herod next seized Peter and put him in prison, where he was chained and guarded by soldiers. But the Lord brought him out, and delivered him from Herod's power. Soon after this, Herod was seized with a sudden and most painful disease, whilst he was allowing the people to praise him as a god ; and he died in a most dreadful manner. Peter lived probably thirty years after this, and preached the gospel to the Gentile nations, and it is supposed that he was put to death in Rome as a martyr. It is said that he was crucified with his head downwards.

After the death of James we do not know much more of the history of John. He probably spent most of his time in Jerusalem. It was important that some of the apostles should remain there, as there would be many occasions for those who were going abroad to preach the gospel, to ask their advice and direction. One such case is known. When Paul and Barnabas thought that some persons were teaching what was not right, it was determined that they would ask the opinion of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. They met for this purpose, and John was one of the principal persons in the meeting; for Paul, writing about it afterwards in a letter to the Christians in Galatia, said that John, Peter, and James (the son of Alpheus) appeared to be pillars, or chief supporters of the church in Jerusalem. This meeting or council was held about the year 50, nearly twenty years after the death of the Lord Jesus.

JOHN IN EPHESUS.

UP to this time we have gathered our account of the life of John from the New Testament. The history of the rest of his life is very uncertain, but we shall give it as well as it can be collected from other histories.

It appears that after spending many years at Jerusalem, the mother of Jesus having died there, John went into Asia Minor. In the year 71 all that the Lord had foretold of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple came to pass. It was to John and three other apostles who came to him on the Mount of Olives, that Jesus had made known what should take place at this time. John must have been expecting the fulfilment of the prediction, and it was perhaps one of the reasons why he left the city. It did not, therefore, surprise him when he heard of it, and though it was nearly forty years since Jesus had declared it, it only proved to him, as it ought to us, that the threats and promises of God will certainly be fulfilled, though they may some-

times seem to be delayed. Not a stone of the temple was left upon another, and its very foundations were ploughed up. The wretched inhabitants of the city were destroyed by fire, famine, and the sword, or tortured and crucified to death; and those that escaped death in the city, were carried away as slaves, or thrown to wild beasts in the Roman theatres. How distressing this account must have been to John! Yet he knew that the guilty people brought these judgments upon themselves by their obstinate rejection of the Messiah.

John lived principally in the city of Ephesus, a large and splendid city on the river Cayster. The gospel had been first preached there by the apostle Paul about the year 54, at which time he found the city wholly given to idolatry. When John lived there, there were many Christians in the city. There were also many other places in that part of Asia where were Christian churches, as Laodicea, Smyrna, Sardis, and others. It was therefore a very important situation for an aged and experienced apostle to reside in. He probably spent much of his time in visiting these dif-



ferent churches, and the people must have been very glad to receive the man who had been the beloved disciple of the Lord Jesus, and who could tell them so much about him and his gospel. We may feel very sure that one of the duties he often spoke to them about, was that of loving each other, and that he set an example of this himself. For this was the subject he delighted to speak and write about. As he said—“ *He that loveth not, knoweth not*

God ; for God is love." And when speaking of the wonderful love of God, in sending his Son into the world to save sinners, he would say to Christians—"*Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."*

But mild and kind as were his character, and his doctrines, even John did not escape the hatred of the wicked. In the year 81, Domitian became emperor of Rome. He was a cruel tyrant, and delighted in wickedness. As the Roman power at that time extended into Asia, John was within the reach of this emperor, who hated a religion that was so pure and different from his own character as that of the gospel. He of course hated all who loved and obeyed the gospel, and persecuted and destroyed many Christians. It is said, that he ordered John to be thrown into a bath of boiling oil, and that the apostle was not injured. But whether this is true or not, it is certain that the emperor wished to put him out of the way. John was known as the principal, perhaps the only, apostle then alive, and his influence was great in Asia. The emperor, therefore, ordered him to be ban-

ished to an island of the Mediterranean sea. John was now about ninety years old, and was thus forced to leave his Christian friends and the beloved churches of Christ, and go to live on a barren island like a criminal.

JOHN IN PATMOS.

THE place to which John was sent was Patmos, an island in that branch of the Mediterranean sea which was called the Ægean sea, or Archipelago, and not many miles



from the coast of Asia. It is a rocky, barren spot, twenty-five or thirty miles in circumference, and was used by the Romans as a

place of exile for those who had been condemned for their crimes.

One Sabbath, which since the resurrection of our Lord was observed on Sunday instead of Saturday, and called the *Lord's-day*, a most remarkable occurrence took place. It is likely that John, whilst in Patmos, spent these holy days in prayer and meditation; as he would not be permitted to preach the gospel to the other prisoners, if any, on the island. But the Lord did not forget or forsake him. On this day, whilst he was alone, he heard a voice speaking behind him, which sounded as loud as a trumpet, and caused him to listen. The voice was from God, and told him he was going to see some things which he must write an account of in a book, and send it to the churches of Ephesus, Laodicea, and the others which John well knew in Asia. Upon hearing the voice John turned round, and saw what seemed to be seven large candlesticks made of gold, and among them a person like his beloved Lord, but in a very glorious and splendid appearance. John was struck with so much astonishment and awe, that he fell at his feet, as if he were dead. But the Lord

laid his hand upon him, and told him not to be afraid, for he was *the first and the last* ; *he that had been dead, but was now alive, and would be alive for ever, and had the keys of hell and of death.* This was the beginning of a long dream, or vision, in which the Lord caused many things to appear before John, as they were about to take place in the course of time. The different persons and events were not shown by name or by description, but by things that are like them. And though John wrote down what he saw, yet there are a great many parts of this vision, the meaning of which cannot be easily understood. The reason of this is, that the vision, or revelation, was not only for John, but for Christians of all times to read ; and as nearly the whole of it is a prediction, it was better to speak of things that were going to happen, in such a way that persons would not understand it until they had really taken place. For then it would be a proof that God knew what was going to occur, and that men had not done the things which had been predicted, for the purpose of bringing them to pass.

Some parts of John's vision were of things that seemed to take place in heaven. At one time he saw what appeared to be the throne of God, with holy beings praising him. Then he saw a lamb which seemed to have been once killed, but had become alive. This represented Jesus Christ, who was called the Lamb of God, because he died as a sacrifice for sin. And to show the glory that Christ has in heaven, John saw hundreds of thousands of angels praising him. One of their songs was : "*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*" And to show that Jesus was now reigning with his Father in heaven, one of the songs was this—" *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.*" Thus was Christ shown to be worshipped with the Father, as one God with him. Some of the heavenly beings had censers, or bowls, of delightful odours, that were offered to the Lamb; which was meant to signify, that prayers were made

to the Lord Jesus, and through him to the Father, as the mediator and intercessor of his people.

Many things were shown in this vision that were to take place in the history of the church of Christ. One of the appearances that John saw was an angel flying with the gospel, which he was about to carry to every nation on the earth. This signified that God intended that the whole world shall have the gospel, and hear of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. And though there are now six hundred millions of our fellow creatures who have not yet received the gospel, this very vision is one of the promises which encourages the people of God in sending missionaries, Bibles, tracts, and books, all over the world.

John also understood from the vision that a time would come when there should be great peace and righteousness on the earth for a long period. This was represented by an angel coming from heaven and chaining Satan, and fastening him in prison for a thousand years. This is the time that is still

looked and prayed for as the Millennium. The last thing that John saw in his vision, or trance, was a representation of heaven. He saw a beautiful and happy place, where there were none but good and holy persons. 'There was no sickness nor distress there. No one was in pain ; no one was in danger of dying, for there was no such thing as death. 'The Lord Jesus was there, and every one was happy with him. All was glorious, and pure, and delightful ; and it was to last for ever and ever. The Lord would never—never leave the place, and his people would serve him there and love him, and be loved by him without any end or change. This was to show how holy and happy heaven is, and how *blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.* The vision ended by representing the Redeemer and the Holy Spirit calling sinners to *come* ; and telling all who heard the invitation to say to others *come* ; and inviting all who are willing to come, to enjoy this happiness. And this means that the Lord Jesus who has died as the Lamb of God, and the Holy Spi-

rit who changes the heart and makes men fit for heaven, are willing to receive every sinner who comes repenting of his sins, and sincerely trusting in the Lord Jesus for salvation.

The whole account which John wrote of this vision is in the last book of the New Testament, and is called **THE REVELATION**; because so many future things are *revealed* or made known in it.

JOHN'S WRITINGS.

THE emperor Domitian, who banished John to Patmos, died in the year 96. Upon his death, the Roman senate, in the reign of the emperor Nerva, permitted those who had been exiled to return to their homes ; John then went to Ephesus. How rejoiced must his pious friends in the churches have been, to see the aged apostle once more, after an absence of not much less than two years ! But though he had been so unjustly treated, he did not encourage them to indulge any angry feelings towards his persecutors. He still preached to them to love each other, and to be at peace with all men.

John was now very aged, and could not expect to live much longer to preach the gospel, and tell what he had heard Jesus say, and what he had seen him do. There were three histories then published of the Lord ; one by the apostle Matthew, one by the evangelist Mark, and the third by the evangelist Luke. Matthew had been with the Lord, and had himself seen or known all that he wrote.

Mark and Luke were not apostles, but were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write their narratives. The same Spirit led John to determine to write another history. For there were many important occurrences and sayings of the Lord which none of the others had published, and which John had seen and heard himself. For though, as John said, it would be impossible to write an account of all that Christ said and did during the time he and the other apostles were with him, yet there were many things which ought to be known to all Christians. These he remembered well, and perhaps had kept a written account of. But the Holy Spirit directed him, and kept him from all mistake, and enabled him to relate the whole without error.

Another great object of John seems to have been to keep Christians from ever doubting whether Jesus was really a divine being. Notwithstanding all the mighty works which he had done to prove that he was God, as really as man, some persons might be found who would venture to say that this could not be true. And there might be some absurd attempts made to explain this great fact in

some other way than God had revealed it. He therefore began his history by declaring, in the most plain and positive manner, that the Lord Jesus, or as he is called, *the Word*, was in the beginning of all things, before the world was created: that he was with God; and that *he was God*; that he made all things, and that nothing was made without him. He relates that Jesus said openly to the Jews, *I and my Father are one*, and to one of his disciples, *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father—Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me*. Towards the close of the book he says that he had written it, that those who read it might “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through his name.”

A very important account is given by John which is not mentioned by the other writers. It is the conversation which Jesus had with Nicodemus, a Jewish ruler, in which the Lord told him plainly that unless the heart of a man is renewed by the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter heaven. This doctrine is often spoken of by the sacred writers, but John

gives the very words of the Lord himself, to convince every one that not only their sins must be pardoned, but their hearts sanctified, that they may be fit to be where God is. This change or effect our Lord called a *regeneration*, or *new birth*, to show that it is like making a man a new being, so different is he from what he was before. And another most solemn and interesting portion of the gospel of John is, the kind advice and comfort the Lord Jesus gave to his disciples shortly before his death, and the prayer he made for them, which are found in the four chapters from the fourteenth to the seventeenth.

It was whilst he lived in Ephesus, either before or after his exile to Patmos, that John wrote three letters which are part of the New Testament. The first was probably written to Christians everywhere, and not to any particular people. One great design was, as in his gospel, to teach that Jesus Christ was truly God as well as man. He says that if any one denies the Son of God, he denies the Father. He begins his letter, as he did his gospel, by calling Jesus “the Word, and the

eternal life that was with the Father ;” and ends it by declaring, *This is the true God and eternal life.*

John wrote this epistle with as much tenderness and affection as an aged father would write a letter to his family, from whom he was soon to be separated. He called them his “little children,” and very often begged them to love each other like brothers. In this he only imitated the example and doctrine of his Lord, who shortly before his death said to the eleven apostles, “Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me : and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come ; so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” In the same manner John wrote to all Christians, assuring them that, if they had not this affection, it was proof they were not the children of God. He spoke to them much of the Lord Jesus, telling them that they must fol-

low his example, and look to him for help and mercy. And as he had heard Jesus himself once say that his people must depend upon him, just as the branch of a vine or tree has to depend on the vine or tree itself, so John said, in his letter, that Christians must still depend on their Saviour, until he should come in the last day to take them for ever to himself. He told them to think how great the love of God was, in sending his own Son into the world, that through him sinners might be pardoned, and be treated, for his sake, as his children. And when he spoke of the love of Christ in consenting to die in the place of sinners, he said that surely they should love each other, and be kind, and do good, whenever any were in want or trouble. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one

another." The great commandments of the gospel, John said, are these,—

BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST;
LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

There is another letter that John wrote, called in the New Testament his *second epistle*. This is very short, and appears to have been written to some pious woman. He told her how glad he was to find her children walking in the true and right way. Nothing in the world makes a religious mother so happy as to see her children growing up in the love of God, and keeping his commandments. John knew how thankful the lady he wrote to must be for this blessing. But he warned her to be careful; for there were many persons in the world who rejected Christ, and would not acknowledge that he had come. It is very necessary that pious parents should try to keep their children established in the truth. This they should do by teaching them the Scriptures, and praying constantly for the Holy Spirit to help them to understand and believe the truth, just as God has revealed it. For this is the true

disposition in which to receive the word of God. This is true faith, to believe whatever God says, without doubt or objection. John therefore advised this lady to keep out of the company of all persons who taught differently from the Scriptures, and not to allow such to be in her house and talking to her children. He begs her also to remember the great commandment, *Love one another*.

There is one more letter of John's, which he wrote to a man named Gaius. There was a man of that name who lived in Corinth, who was very kind to the apostle Paul, and to many other Christians, whom he was glad to have staying in his house when they came to that city. It is probable this was the person to whom John wrote this letter, for in it he speaks of him as being charitable and helping Christians on their journeys. John, in his affectionate manner, calls him one of his children, and tells him that he had no greater joy than to find his children walking in the truth.

How happy would it be if all men were to follow the advice of John, and love each other ! Then there would be no wars, nor quarrels,

nor violence. Every one would be trying to do good to others. And this is the way in which men ought to live ; for they are all brothers. We are all descended from the same first parents. But, above all, *Christians* should love each other. They love the same Saviour ; they are like his family. He often told them they must be united with him and with each other, and that there should be no difference among them, any more than the limbs of the same body should disagree with each other. This was to be one of the proofs of the truth of the Christian religion in all ages of the world ; for the Lord Jesus praying for his apostles said, “ Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word ; that they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us ; *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*” Christians may worship God in different places, and their churches have different names, but nothing should prevent their loving each other. Oh, let us remember what John has written, “ This commandment have we from Him, *That he who loveth God, love his brother also.*”

JOHN'S OLD AGE AND DEATH.

AFTER his return from Patmos to Ephesus, John did not live more than three or four years. He visited the different churches, giving them his advice, and going among them like a venerable father. An ancient writer relates that the following occurrence took place at this time.

Whilst he was visiting the members of a church in a city not far from Ephesus, he met with a youth with whom he was so much pleased that he hoped he would become a preacher of the gospel. He told this to the minister of the church, and begged him to train the young man for the service of Christ. The minister did as John requested, and took the youth to his own house. After some time he was baptized, and the minister, believing him to be a sincere Christian, did not attend to him so strictly as he had done. The young man, perhaps, thinking like too many others, that he was safe for eternity because he was a member of the church, became careless in his conduct, and falling into bad com-

pany, was led entirely astray. He went on from one sin to another, until at last he became a robber. Having given up all his hopes, he tried to keep away the dreadful recollections of what he had once professed to be, by becoming worse and worse in his crimes. He gathered other robbers together, and was their leader, exceeding them all in cruelty and boldness.

After some time, John, visiting the same city again, asked the minister about the youth he had given into his care. When he was told that, instead of being prepared for the church, he was at the head of a company of robbers in the mountains, John was filled with distress. He inquired about the place where the young man was supposed to be, and old as he was, went to seek for him. When he came to the mountain, he was seized by some of the band of robbers. He asked them to take him to their captain. They did so; but when the young man saw that they were bringing into his presence the aged apostle who had shown him so much affection, and had believed him to be a disciple of Jesus, he was ashamed to meet him, and fled. John went after him,

crying out, "Why dost thou fly, my child, from thy unarmed and gray-haired father? Have pity upon me, my child! Be not afraid—there is still hope. I will intercede for thee with Christ. Stop! believe that Christ has sent me."

The young man stopped, threw away his weapons, and began to tremble and weep bitterly. And when John came up to him he knelt down before the aged apostle, and with tears entreated his forgiveness. The writer adds, that John brought him back to the city, and by the blessing of God on his prayers, fastings, and exhortations, he was restored to the church, and lived a consistent Christian.

John was now approaching the hundredth year of his age. He had lived to see the destruction of Jerusalem, and was left the only one of the apostles, and perhaps the only one of those who had seen and known the Lord Jesus on the earth. He was not able any longer to leave Ephesus, and visit the other churches of Asia. He must have felt a particular interest in them, after the solemn messages which the Lord had sent to them in his vision

in Patmos. Even to the church at Ephesus the Lord had said, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

At last he became so feeble that he could not walk to the place of worship. But he loved it too well to be absent, and he used to be carried there every Lord's-day by some of his pupils. The people must have been glad to hear him speak, but he had not strength to say much; and towards the last part of his life he said nothing else than **LITTLE CHILDREN, LOVE ONE ANOTHER.** When he was asked why he said this so often, he replied, "Because it is the Lord's command, and if that alone be done it is sufficient." By this he no doubt meant the same as he did in his letters, when he said that the love of Christians to each other proves that they are the true disciples of Christ. "We know," said he, "that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Beloved, let us love one

another; for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God." Or, as Jesus himself had said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

In this way did the beloved disciple spend the last years of his life, and died in the Lord about the year 100; seventy years after the crucifixion of the Saviour, and seventy-three or four since he had been called from Genesareth to follow him. He had followed him as his disciple on earth, and now followed him to the mansions which he had gone to prepare for him. He had seen a representation of heaven in his vision at Patmos. It appeared to him as a splendid city, with a wall whose foundations were precious stones, and its gates pearls; whose street was of gold, and whose light was clear as crystal. But all these were but comparisons of what the glory of heaven is. It is not a superb city, where the people of God will be rewarded with riches and pleasures such as are found in this world. All that we can say of heaven is that it is *perfectly holy, and perpetually happy, for ever and ever.*

The promise which John heard was, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." There can be no doubt that upon his death John found this promise fulfilled to himself; for, through Christ, he had overcome sin and the world, and for the sake of what Jesus did and suffered as his Redeemer, he was acknowledged as a child of God and an heir of heaven. In heaven "there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him." Does the reader of this book desire to be one of those servants? And not only to serve, but to reign, for ever and ever? If you do, follow the example of John, and become the disciple of the Lord Jesus; love the Saviour as John did, and you too will be a *beloved disciple*. But that you may do this, you must go to Him, repenting of your sins, and not trusting in yourselves, but looking to him for strength. You must depend on his mercy and the influence of the Holy Spirit, but you must seek for them with earnestness. And listen to the encouragement which John himself heard from Jesus.

“AND THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY, COME :
AND LET HIM THAT HEARETH SAY, COME :
AND LET HIM THAT IS ATHIRST COME :
AND WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE
WATER OF LIFE FREELY.”

THE END.

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